



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 20 October 2021

Legislative Assembly

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

PAPERS TABLED

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

VISITORS — INDONESIAN COMMUNITY

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [12.04 pm]: I would like to acknowledge the members of the Indonesian community who are in the public gallery today. Welcome to Parliament House. I understand that Minister Buti will be making a special acknowledgement a little later.

POLICE AMENDMENT (COMPENSATION SCHEME) BILL 2021

Notice of Motion to Introduce

Notice of motion given by **Mr P. Papalia (Minister for Police)**.

#WEWEARAUSTRALIAN CAMPAIGN

Statement by Minister for Culture and the Arts

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Culture and the Arts) [12.04 pm]: Madam Speaker, I wish to speak on a matter of fashion, which, of course, I am eminently qualified to speak on!

The SPEAKER: Yes, Sir Les! Go ahead, Sir Les!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am delighted to inform the house of the Showroom-X partnership, a partnership between Tourism Western Australia and a collection of high-calibre Australian fashion brands. The Showroom-X partnership centres on a fashion shoot in Broome and the East Kimberley that is taking place now, across October and November 2021, with destination imagery being shared across the social media channels of up to 40 well-known fashion brands, showcasing the state's most awe-inspiring locations to millions of people around the world.

The initiative supports the #WeWearAustralian campaign with Showroom-X, a collective of Australian fashion brands including Morrison, Ellery, Scanlan and Theodore, and Aboriginal-owned label Ngali. The fashion industry has been among those hit hard during the COVID-19 pandemic, and with WA talent leading the creative team, and being used throughout the campaign, the McGowan government is proud to be supporting Western Australian businesses and jobs.

A campaign photoshoot is underway in Broome and Kununurra, with renowned Australian brands to be featured against the backdrop of locations such as Gantheaume Point and Cable Beach in Broome, and the Bungle Bungle Range in Purnululu National Park. The Kimberley will provide a stunning backdrop for this campaign, promoting the "buy local" message across Australia, and showcasing our incredible fashion industry and destinations globally. The campaign is led by the Western Australian-raised creative director Ken Leung, who has previously worked with global labels such as Uniqlo and DKNY.

A member interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am wearing a piece myself today!

The #WeWearAustralian campaign will go live from 27 October and will include digital and social media activity, as well as media placement in key national and international outlets, including *The Australian* and *T: The New York Times Style Magazine*. Showroom-X estimates that the Kimberley feature will reach more than 12 million people around the world. This partnership is an exciting opportunity to showcase our state to millions of people in key markets around the world as a must-visit destination when it is safe to travel. The WA government is continuing to lift the profile of our destinations, and it is through innovative partnerships like this that we will start to shape and inspire a new target audience of global travellers eager to experience our stunning state.

CORONAVIRUS — RELIEF FUND — INDONESIA

Statement by Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests) [12.07 pm]: Could I commence by also acknowledging the wonderful members of the Western Australian Indonesian community, who are in the public gallery, and welcome them to Parliament.

I would like to inform the house that the process for the Indonesia COVID-19 crisis relief fund, announced by the McGowan government in August 2021, has now been finalised. The fund was designed to assist in easing Indonesia's

suffering during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been exacerbated by the highly contagious Delta variant. The \$2 million Indonesia COVID-19 crisis relief fund is administered as a grant program by the Office of Multicultural Interests.

Twenty-two Western Australian Indonesian community associations and groups came together to prepare and submit a joint grant application through Kreasi Indonesia Inc. Kreasi Indonesia will lead the cooperative approach to support crisis relief initiatives in Indonesia through its charity partner, Save the Children Australia. This second wave of COVID-19 has infected millions of people across Indonesia and has resulted in the deaths of more than 140 000 people. The impact of this crisis is heavily felt by the Indonesian communities of Western Australia. More than 11 000 Western Australians were born in Indonesia or have Indonesian ancestry, with many having family and friends affected by the pandemic. The funding recognises the importance of our economic, cultural and person-to-person links with Indonesia and its people, and will support the excellent work of registered charities who are delivering aid in the areas that are most in need.

I would like to acknowledge that throughout the pandemic, Western Australians from Indonesian heritage have not only played an important role in keeping our state safe, but, at the same time, also supported relief initiatives in Indonesia. This one-off grant will provide essential on-the-ground assistance to badly affected communities, and assist in their recovery from the devastating impact of this second wave. I commend the WA Indonesian community associations in coming together and working collaboratively to ensure this funding support reaches people in need across Indonesia.

FOOTBALL PROGRAM — KIMBERLEY

Statement by Minister for Sport and Recreation

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Sport and Recreation) [12.09 pm]: I rise to inform the house of a significant partnership between the Australian Football League and the McGowan government in the Kimberley region. The McGowan government is partnering with the AFL to deliver a jointly funded, \$5 million football program in the Kimberley. This program will ensure a strong legacy is created following Western Australia's historic first AFL grand final. There are 82 football teams, 17 Auskick centres and almost 2 600 registered football participants across the Kimberley. It is a region rich with enormous football talent, be it at the local, West Australian Football League or AFL level. Footballers in the regions, particularly the Kimberley, often face significant challenges to participation in sport including distance, travel costs and lack of facilities.

The program, delivering \$1 million per year over five years, will support a range of initiatives including facility upgrades and community participation initiatives. The program will focus on four key development areas: \$400 000 per annum on facilities upgrades, including lighting, ground improvements, and female change rooms and amenities; \$350 000 per annum on community participation initiatives, including investment in the local football leagues, as well as new positions to support the development of football in the Kimberley; and \$150 000 per annum towards the development of elite pathways. Complementing the Kimberley Spirit and Claremont Football Club programs, this funding will provide support to regionally based coaches to oversee pathway programs; \$100 000 per annum is committed to travel subsidies and to help remove barriers to regular competition, particularly for remote communities participating in the Kimberley football leagues. This \$5 million funding program follows recent state government investments in Kimberley football by the WA McGowan government. This includes \$339 000 for floodlighting at Joseph "Nipper" Roe Sports Field in Broome and \$592 000 to upgrade change rooms and lighting at Clarrie Cassidy Oval in Wyndham. Strong football clubs contribute considerably to stronger communities and better social outcomes for community members. Be it through important physical and mental health or positive community outcomes, it is clear that the benefits of well-supported community sport go well beyond the results of weekend fixtures. This program will build on these benefits, ensuring the AFL grand final is not a one-hit wonder and that its legacy will positively impact grassroots football for years to come.

FOOD SECURITY — COMMUNITY ONLINE RESOURCE EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Statement by Minister for Community Services

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Community Services) [12.12 pm]: I rise to inform the house about the ongoing work across the community to address poverty and, in particular, food insecurity across the state. In doing so, I acknowledge it is currently Anti-Poverty Week, and draw members' attention to the *Foodbank hunger report 2021*, which states that one in six Australian adults have not had enough to eat in the last year. On top of this, 1.2 million children have gone hungry during the same period. When it comes to food security, one of the greatest challenges is connecting those who need access to food with the oversupply and waste of excess foods. I have been proud to support the community services sector in addressing this complex and longstanding issue in our community.

In 2019, the food relief framework was developed and launched with support from Lotterywest, which has been a catalyst for stakeholders across the state to come together under the banner of Fair Food WA. In 2020, the Premier and I hosted a strategic food industry round table to strengthen the coordination of efforts to ensure that excess food can get to where it is most acutely needed. That work has continued, and, last Friday, I joined Fair Food WA in launching the next step—the community online resource exchange program, or CORE. Following consultations

with over 150 charity food providers and stakeholders across the state, it became clear that there was a need for stronger collaboration and coordination at a local level. CORE is an online resource that provides a platform for local businesses and charities to exchange surplus resources—in real time—to better meet the needs of their communities. It enables surplus food, clothing, furniture, logistics and infrastructure to get to where it is needed in supporting our most vulnerable. We know that in government, sometimes the best solutions to complex issues come from the community.

I would like to place on record my thanks to Fair Food WA, in particular the Western Australian Council of Social Service, Foodbank, SecondBite, St Vincent de Paul Society, the Salvation Army, St Patrick's Community Support Centre in Fremantle, and Curtin University. I also want to acknowledge my former parliamentary colleague, the formidable Janine Freeman, who is now the chair of Fair Food WA. I encourage members of this place to learn more about this work and support it where they can.

BEACH EMERGENCY NUMBER SIGNS

Statement by Minister for Fisheries

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Fisheries) [12.15 pm]: I am delighted to inform the house that the McGowan Labor government is working hard to improve beach safety along the Western Australian coast. Since 2017, the McGowan government has provided funding for the installation of beach emergency number, or BEN, signs on the coast between the WA and South Australian border and Geraldton. So far, almost 1 300 signs have been installed along Western Australia's coastline, and the southern rollout of BEN signs is likely to be completed by the end of the year.

The BEN signs project was initiated by Mr Rick Gerring after the tragic death of his brother Ben, who was fatally injured by a shark while surfing off Falcon Beach in Mandurah. The first BEN signs were launched in Kwinana in 2018 by Rick; my predecessor in the Fisheries portfolio, Hon David Kelly; and Deputy Premier and Kwinana MLA, Hon Roger Cook. BEN signs are prominently located at WA beaches, each with a unique identifying number to help emergency services pinpoint an exact location to attend to and improve response times for serious incidents.

Beach emergency number signs provide vital support to first responders to emergencies and form part of the state government's comprehensive shark mitigation strategy. The continuation of the program for the northern coastline was announced in December 2020, with nine local government authorities having submitted an expression of interest for the signs. I am pleased to advise that the Shire of Chapman Valley is the first local government authority between Geraldton and Kununurra to share in \$600 000 of available grant funding for the northern rollout of BEN signs. Up to \$50 000 is available to each of the 12 eligible local government authorities to improve beach safety for their communities. The BEN sign initiative is making a difference. By the end of August 2021, St John Ambulance had received 457 requests for ambulance attendance referencing BEN signs and the WA Police Force had 329 requests for police assistance. I congratulate the Shire of Chapman Valley for leading the northern rollout and thank other shires working with the McGowan government to help bring BEN signs to their beaches.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS

Statement by Minister for Seniors and Ageing

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Seniors and Ageing) [12.17 pm]: I rise to inform the house that 1 October marked the International Day of Older Persons. International Day of Older Persons was designated by the United Nations General Assembly in 1990 with the understanding that an ageing population brings challenges and opportunities. For 31 years, this day has been an opportunity to acknowledge the important contributions that older people have made, and continue to make, to the community and to raise awareness of the unique issues facing older people.

The theme for this year is digital equity for all ages, which highlights the importance of digital inclusion and literacy for older persons. This year's theme is particularly appropriate as we move towards a more digitally connected world due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The year 2020 was especially challenging for older Australians who were isolated from their support networks and did not necessarily have the digital literacy skills to maintain important connections. But our older people took on the challenge and showed incredible resilience. Aligned with this year's theme was the release of the *Digital strategy for the Western Australian government 2021–2025* in June 2021. The strategy outlines how the state government is planning to increase digital interaction with the community through four priority areas, one of which is digital inclusivity. Through the strategy, the McGowan government is committed to ensuring no-one is left behind as we move further into a digital world by removing barriers to access it.

The International Day of Older Persons is also a time to raise awareness about age discrimination, also referred to as ageism. The Australian Human Rights Commission found that 43 per cent of people aged 65 years and over have experienced age discrimination, which refers to how we think, feel or act towards people based on their age. These are very concerning figures. For older people, ageism is an everyday challenge that can affect their employment, access to social services and events, and their self-image, and includes calls made previously by members opposite for my early retirement! Only as a whole community can we work together to make WA inclusive and respectful for people of all ages.

MINING AMENDMENT BILL 2021*Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr W.J. Johnston (Minister for Mines and Petroleum)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

Second Reading

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Mines and Petroleum) [12.20 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Mining Amendment Bill 2021 is to amend the Mining Act 1978 to increase the efficiency of applications and assessments for mining activities. The amendments will modernise activity approvals under the Mining Act and embed a risk-based, outcomes-focused regulatory framework. In addition to reducing the administrative burden on industry for applications and ongoing approvals, these amendments will assist to target the government's efforts to effectively regulate the sector and minimise risk to the environment.

I will now summarise the key features of the bill, which will establish a new part in the Mining Act with clear conditions and procedures for the application, assessment and approval of mining activities. This part includes a new automated authorisation pathway for eligible mining activities, and introduces an approvals statement for mining operations as the ongoing instrument for managing and updating activity approvals and conditions over time.

Currently, the provisions that require tenement holders to submit applications and receive approval for activities are scattered throughout the act. The bill will introduce a new part 4AA called "Conditions and approvals" that will consolidate all activity approvals into one part. Bringing all these provisions into one dedicated part clearly separates processes for granting tenements from the subsequent approvals process for prospecting, exploration or undertaking mining operations. This part will impose clear obligations regarding the types of activities that require approval, the information requirements of applications and the conditions to which those activities will be subject, if approved. The part also sets out clear and transparent assessment and approval procedures that are not provided for in the current act.

A key feature of the new part is the introduction of a new eligible mining activity framework—a new form of automated authorisation to enable a faster approvals process for certain eligible activities. This will remove the current time period for an application to await and undergo assessment while ensuring full information capture and appropriate regulation of those activities without compromising environmental outcomes. Prior to commencing an eligible mining activity, an EMA notice will be able to be lodged through an online system, automated screening will occur, and the activity will be authorised immediately, subject to standard conditions. The specific detail of the activities to be considered an "eligible mining activity" and standard conditions will be prescribed in supporting regulations and will be subject to a separate consultation period following passage of these amendments.

The other key aspect of the EMA framework is acknowledging that there are areas of the state where it is not appropriate or feasible for activities to be authorised via an automated assessment. The Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety acknowledges the need to incorporate the consideration of reserved lands, particularly lands reserved for conservation purposes, in the design of the framework. Following extensive consultation with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, the notice provisions uphold the procedural requirements of section 23 of the Mining Act, which requires consent of relevant ministers to carry out mining on public reserves or commonwealth land. This consent to access reserved lands is given based on specific activities and may be subject to particular conditions. Therefore, applications in these areas need to be subject to a manual assessment and not via the EMA framework. All reserves, including the conservation estate in its entirety, will be excluded from an EMA notice being lodged to ensure environmental officers will continue to assess all applications in these areas.

In addition, other areas of potential value to the state that are not otherwise formally protected can be gazetted on a case-by-case basis to be excluded from the submission of an EMA notice, and will have to be assessed by an officer via a program of work or mining development and closure proposal. DMIRS will continue to collaborate with stakeholders, including DBCA, in the process of determining the eligibility criteria for an EMA notice to inform the drafting of the supporting regulations for the bill. It is intended that the framework will commence for those activities that are currently assessed and approved via a program of work spatial application, and may be extended to mining operations when the lodgement system is available.

For mining operations, the single approvals statements will streamline the application and approval process. This is a new instrument that will clearly record the approved mining operations and corresponding conditions of approval. Currently, when DMIRS approves a mining proposal, compliance with the commitments and activities proposed is enforced by the imposition of tenement conditions. For sites with multiple tenements, this results in the need to manage compliance with multiple documents and conditions. This creates additional administrative effort for both industry and DMIRS and does not result in an efficient process. Most sites are covered by a number of different mining proposals, all with conditions that need to be met and reported against. Sometimes conditions relating to different approved documents may contradict each other. Also, as the document is approved, tenement holders are obliged to continue to operate in the way that has been approved rather than adopting improved practices.

The introduction of an approvals statement will consolidate all approved activities and relevant environmental conditions across multiple tenements and set clear relevant parameters of the approval. The bill changes the focus of approvals to the specific activities, conditions of those activities and closure outcomes to be achieved through rehabilitation of the operation. This focus is also reflected in the amalgamation of the mining proposal and the mine closure plan into a single mining development and closure proposal that removes duplication up-front and targets the information requirements needed at the approval stage. This will result in clarity of the approved activities and conditions and efficiencies for both industry and DMIRS in terms of managing compliance with approvals. It will also mean that the focus of the approval is on the specific activities and how they will be managed so that there are no unacceptable impacts on the environment, rather than the approval of multiple documents. This will significantly reduce regulatory burden on tenement holders as they will no longer have to report against a myriad of conditions set over time. They will report on outcomes-focused conditions set specifically on each activity, which will provide flexibility for proponents to change their environmental management over time to meet best practice standards. This will provide much better outcomes for the environment.

In conclusion, this bill will significantly reduce regulatory burden for industry and government, while at the same time strengthen and improve environmental management of mining activities. This is consistent with the principles of best practice environmental regulation—accountable, transparent, predictable, proportional and targeted. The reforms proposed in this bill will greatly streamline activity approvals and improve regulation under the Mining Act.

I commend the bill to the house.

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

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2021

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr W.J. Johnston (Minister for Mines and Petroleum)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

Second Reading

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Mines and Petroleum) [12.30 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

In June 2020, the McGowan government introduced the Industrial Relations Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 into Parliament. Unfortunately, the bill did not pass before Parliament was prorogued before the last state election. The government made an election commitment to reintroduce the bill and progress various other industrial relations reforms should it be re-elected. I am now pleased to bring before the house the Industrial Relations Legislation Amendment Bill 2021, which is largely an embodiment of the 2020 bill. The bill will implement key recommendations of two independent reviews—namely, the 2018 review of the state industrial relations system conducted by Mark Ritter, SC, and Stephen Price, MLA, and the 2019 inquiry into wage theft in Western Australia conducted by Tony Beech.

I would like to draw attention to key reforms in the bill. The first, and possibly the most important, is to remove exclusions from state industrial laws that currently mean that some employees in Western Australia have no employment protections whatsoever. State industrial laws exclude various categories of employees from their coverage, including employees engaged in domestic service in a private home. It is an unacceptable situation in the twenty-first century. The commonwealth government has identified these antiquated exclusions as a barrier to Australia ratifying the International Labour Organization's Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930. This important protocol aims to support the global fight against forced labour, people trafficking and modern slavery.

The Office of International Law within the commonwealth Attorney-General's Department has confirmed that the gap in coverage in Western Australia results in Australia's noncompliance with Article 2(c)(i) of the protocol. The Office of International Law has advised the McGowan government —

... this obstacle to compliance with the Protocol could be overcome by Western Australia enacting legislative changes to ensure that the Western Australian industrial relations framework applies to all workers in Western Australia who are not covered by the national industrial relations framework.

The bill will ensure that no category of Western Australian employee is excluded from state employment protections, thereby enabling the commonwealth government to ratify the ILO protocol.

At the heart of the state industrial relations system is the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission. The bill will broaden the commission's jurisdiction to address contemporary workplace issues, including bullying and sexual harassment. This jurisdiction will be similar to that of the Fair Work Commission under the federal Fair Work Act 2009. Workers will have a quick and inexpensive avenue via the commission to stop workplace bullying and sexual harassment. These provisions complement work health and safety laws and will help to promote cultural change at the workplace, benefiting both employers and workers.

In terms of other reforms to the commission's jurisdiction, the bill will empower the commission to make equal remuneration orders so that employees receive equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value; enable the commission to proactively take steps to ensure comprehensive award coverage for state system employees in the private sector; and enable suitably qualified commissioners to be concurrently appointed as industrial magistrates, namely those who qualify for appointment as a magistrate. This will increase the resourcing of the Industrial Magistrates Court and enable claims before the court, such as underpayment claims, to be dealt with more expeditiously.

The McGowan government is committed to ensuring that employees are paid their correct entitlements and that law-abiding businesses are not undercut by businesses doing the wrong thing by their employees. To this end, the bill will significantly increase pecuniary penalties for noncompliance with state employment laws and introduce tough penalties for employers who engage in wage theft.

In 2019, the McGowan government commissioned the former chief commissioner of the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission, Tony Beech, to identify the reasons that wage theft occurs, the impact of wage theft on employees, employers and the community, and solutions going forward. The inquiry found that wage theft—systematic and deliberate underpayment of wages and other entitlements—is occurring in Western Australia. The inquiry found the likelihood of wage theft to be higher in some industry sectors including cafes and restaurants, contract cleaning and horticulture. This finding is borne out by an ongoing proactive compliance campaign in the state's cafe and restaurant sector undertaken by industrial inspectors of the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety. Between October 2019 and June 2021, industrial inspectors inspected 234 cafes and restaurants. Of those businesses, around 80 per cent were noncompliant with their employment obligations. The department recovered just over \$650 000 in underpayments for 865 employees. These figures are alarming.

The bill implements a number of recommendations of the wage theft inquiry for legislative reform. There will be a prohibition on cashbacks, made infamous by 7-Eleven franchisees, whereby employers require employees to pay back part of their wages in order to circumvent employment laws. There will also be a prohibition on an employer dismissing or otherwise disadvantaging an employee because of the employee's right to inquire or complain about employment conditions, a prohibition on sham contracting arrangements and a prohibition on employment being advertised at less than the applicable minimum wage for the position.

The bill will implement two important election commitments of the McGowan government: to make Easter Sunday a public holiday in Western Australia, and to introduce a minimum entitlement of five days' unpaid family and domestic violence leave for state system employees.

Easter Sunday is a day of cultural and religious significance for many Western Australians. Despite this, it is not currently a public holiday in this state. This means that if employees are required to work on Easter Sunday, they receive no additional recompense for doing so. The bill will make Easter Sunday a public holiday in Western Australia, thereby ensuring that employees who work in seven-day industries receive the benefit of the new public holiday. Easter Sunday is already observed as a public holiday in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory. All these jurisdictions also observe Easter Saturday as a public holiday, as well as South Australia and the Northern Territory.

Consistent with the Fair Work Act 2009, the bill will introduce a minimum entitlement to five days' unpaid family and domestic violence leave. This leave will be available to all employees, including casuals. It is an important measure to support employees in crisis and recognises the sad reality that around two-thirds of assaults and one-half of homicides in Western Australia are related to family and domestic violence. I commend the many Western Australian employers who have already voluntarily implemented policies to support employees experiencing this form of violence. The new leave entitlement is a minimum entitlement only, and will hopefully lead to other workplace initiatives to support affected employees.

The final aspect of the bill that I would like to comment on is a legislative mechanism to enable Western Australian local government employers and employees to be exclusively governed by the state industrial relations system. It is the government's strong view that local governments, as part of the body politic of the state, should be regulated by state industrial laws rather than federal laws. This is already the case in Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia. It should also be the case in Western Australia.

The majority of local governments in Western Australia currently operate in the national industrial relations system on the basis that they are "constitutional corporations" or "trading or financial corporations". The Fair Work Act 2009 is largely underpinned by the corporations power of the commonwealth Constitution. However, the ministerial review of the state industrial relations system identified that there is significant legal doubt whether local governments can be validly regulated by the corporations power. This is currently a moot point. Some local governments argue that Western Australian local governments are, in fact, constitutional corporations. They must, however, fully appreciate the consequences of this proposition. Using the corporations power, the commonwealth Parliament could regulate a wide range of local government affairs. For example, the commonwealth could specify the electoral system to be used to elect members of any Western Australian local government. This would be a most undesirable outcome and an unwelcome intrusion into local politics. I draw members' attention to section 7A of the Salaries and

Allowances Act 1975, which provides for the determination of the remuneration of chief executive officers of local governments by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal. This provision was inserted into the act in 2012 by the former Barnett government, with the full support of the Western Australian Local Government Association. If the Parliament of Western Australia is the appropriate place to pass laws to regulate the employment conditions of chief executive officers of local governments, then logic demands that other local government employees be similarly regulated by state laws.

The McGowan government has sought to work cooperatively with WALGA to ensure there will be a smooth transition of local government employers and employees from the national industrial relations system to the state system. Existing industrial arrangements from the national system will move to the state system for a period to give local government employers sufficient time to adapt to the state system. There will be savings provisions to ensure that employees' entitlements are preserved when they move to the state system. I am confident that the majority of Western Australians would support the government's endeavours to ensure that local governments are regulated by Western Australian laws and not laws made in Canberra. The bill takes an important first step to achieving this objective.

In conclusion, the bill will strengthen protections for vulnerable workers, while at the same time modernise the state industrial relations system. The state system was last comprehensively reviewed and updated in 2002 by the Gallop Labor government. The system is overdue for reform, which this bill will comprehensively deliver on.

I commend the bill to the house.

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

FOREST PRODUCTS AMENDMENT BILL 2021

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr D.J. Kelly (Minister for Forestry)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

Second Reading

MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean — Minister for Forestry) [12.42 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

The McGowan government has made a commitment to transition the Western Australian economy to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The McGowan government accepts the science that underpins our understanding of climate change and acknowledges that climate change has already significantly impacted our environment and community. In the recent state budget, we demonstrated our commitment to act and address our state's contribution to global emissions. We have committed \$750 million to our climate action fund, which will drive Western Australia's low-carbon future. Within this fund is a suite of measures to shape climate-resilient communities, create low-carbon jobs and develop new industries. Our climate action fund builds on the *Western Australian climate policy*, and includes a record \$350 million to significantly expand the state's softwood plantation estate. This investment will also create and secure local jobs, and ensure a strong, sustainable timber industry into the future.

Sustainably produced Western Australian plantation timber will play a key role in our climate change battle. Plantation timber is renewable and has the potential to sequester millions of tonnes of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. It is estimated that the government's \$350 million investment will provide at least an additional 33 000 hectares of softwood timber plantation. Up to 50 million pine trees will be planted, sequestering between 7.9 million and 9.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. Sustainable Western Australian plantation timber also has the power to support the state to enter the carbon offsets market, generating revenue and future carbon industry jobs for Western Australians.

The Forest Products Amendment Bill 2021 will amend the Forest Products Act 2000. The primary purpose of this amendment bill is to expand the functions of the Forest Products Commission to allow it to trade in carbon assets associated with forest products. Under the existing Forest Products Act, the FPC's functions are restricted to dealing with "forest products", which are defined to mean trees, parts of trees and similar products. The statutory expansion of the FPC's functions will grant the FPC the right to own, trade and otherwise deal with carbon assets. By carbon assets, I mean assets related to carbon stored in trees, such as Australian carbon credit units established under the commonwealth Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Act 2011 or equivalent carbon assets under such other legislative schemes as may be suitable. Under the terms of this amendment bill, the FPC will be able to deal with these carbon assets where these carbon assets are associated with forest products located on land that is either owned by the FPC or that the FPC has rights in respect of. When I speak of land that the FPC has rights in respect of, this includes land in which the FPC has sharefarming rights or some other interest. Under this bill, the FPC will not take any interest in carbon assets that may be associated with native forest on crown land. These carbon assets will be administered by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions on behalf of the state.

This bill will enable current and future governments to maximise the benefits from our historic \$350 million investment to expand the softwood estate. Not only will this investment secure the timber for the construction and housing market of tomorrow, but also through this bill we will unlock the carbon value potential of FPC-owned and

managed plantations. Although the FPC will be playing a very active role in administering these plantation assets, it is important to note that this bill will not restrict the FPC to dealing with carbon that is associated with softwood pine. As long as forest products are located on land that is owned by the FPC or that the FPC has a relevant right in respect of—that is, the relevant forest products are not native forest located on crown land—this bill will allow the FPC to own, trade and otherwise deal with carbon assets in those forest products, regardless of species.

In order to support the FPC's new rights in respect of carbon assets, the bill will make a number of further amendments to the Forest Products Act. Principally, the bill will amend the Forest Products Act to allow the FPC to purchase land for the purpose of establishing plantations. The act currently allows the FPC to purchase land for the purposes of office premises and to undertake research activities. This amendment will allow the FPC to also acquire ownership of land in its own name for plantation purposes, allowing the FPC to fully perform its new functions in respect of carbon assets. It is important to note that the bill will not grant the FPC an unrestricted right to acquire land for any purpose whatsoever. The bill will also grant the FPC the right to sell land that it holds.

Finally, the bill will make a number of supporting and ancillary amendments. It will grant the FPC such powers as may be necessary to exercise its new role in trading carbon and require the FPC to report on strategies for exercising those new functions as part of its annual strategic development plan. Clause 8 of the bill will insert a new section 13A into the Forest Products Act to validate a small number of freehold land purchases, for plantation purposes, which the FPC had previously made.

Sustainable plantation timber has an important role in the future of our state to create jobs, fuel the construction industry and reduce Australia's carbon footprint. The government, through the Forest Products Commission, plays a vital role in this future and the development of Western Australia's forest products and the associated carbon market. This amendment bill will enable the FPC to continue to build and maintain a sustainable and commercially viable forest products industry that provides economic and social benefits to the people of Western Australia. I am proud to be part of a government that is taking action to address climate change while at the same time growing and sustaining long-term jobs in the forestry sector.

I commend the bill to the house.

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

**COVID-19 RESPONSE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT
(EXTENSION OF EXPIRING PROVISIONS) BILL (NO. 2) 2021**

As to Introduction and First Reading

On motion by **Mr D.A. Templeman (Leader of the House)**, resolved —

That bills notice of motion 4 be postponed until a later stage of this day's sitting.

SENTENCING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (PERSONS LINKED TO TERRORISM) BILL 2021

Third Reading

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General) [12.50 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a third time.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe) [12.51 pm]: I just had contact with the Leader of the Opposition, who is very busy at the moment. She expressed that she is comfortable with the bill. The Attorney General moved amendments during last night's consideration in detail stage to add to the picture. As the Leader of the Opposition expressed in her second reading contribution, she is comfortable with the legislation, thinks it is appropriate and is happy to go from there.

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General) [12.51 pm] — in reply: I thank all members for participating in the debate on the Sentencing Legislation Amendment (Persons Linked to Terrorism) Bill 2021 last evening. I thank them for their contributions and the swift passage of the bill through this Parliament.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

VETERINARY PRACTICE BILL 2021

Second Reading

Resumed from 9 September.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe) [12.52 pm]: On behalf of the opposition, it gives me great pleasure to speak about the Veterinary Practice Bill 2021. I understand that the Leader of the House is the minister representing the Minister for Agriculture and Food on this bill, which I think is appropriate given his long history in the Narrogin area, his rural background and, of course, that he lives in the somewhat dubious semirural area of Mandurah!

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A.E. Scaife): I believe the term is "peri-urban"!

MR P.J. RUNDLE: Yes, the peri-urban area of Mandurah! It is appropriate that the Leader of the House is the government spokesperson on this bill.

The opposition will be supporting the bill, but, certainly, there are many points that I want clarified. I will be asking questions during consideration in detail because I think clarity is required. To be honest, having read through the many pages of the transcript of the exchanges between Hon Dr Steve Thomas and Hon Alannah MacTiernan during debate on the bill in the upper house, some points of contention have not been decided on and lack clarity, especially some of the regulations that the minister may or may not put in place. Given the numbers in both houses, sometimes we have to take the word of the government as to what it will and will not do. Our ability to change or have any influence on the regulations is a real concern.

Some of the exchanges between Hon Dr Steve Thomas and Hon Alannah MacTiernan were quite humorous. Hon Dr Steve Thomas is quite knowledgeable on this matter after having been a vet in Donnybrook for around 17 years. He pointed out that the Labor Party's one vote, one value changes in the early 2000s put him back into action as a vet and out of action as a member of Parliament, but he has returned bigger and better! He made an excellent contribution to the debate on the bill in the Legislative Council, along with Hon Colin de Grussa, who is the Nationals' main spokesperson on the bill. Of course, Colin has a farming background in Esperance and Hon Steve Martin is a farmer from Wickiepin. It is good to see that there are several farmers in the opposition. Hon Darren West is not the only working farmer in Parliament, as he so often proclaims. Certainly, there are plenty of farmers and former working farmers in the opposition and I am glad about that during a debate like this because they have had hands-on experience.

On several occasions during my farming career, I needed a vet to attend my farm in Katanning, whether it be to get a grass seed out of the foot of our sheepdog, Rex, or from the throat of our border collie or something along those lines—a vet was always needed. For example, when we had to shear our Poll Dorset rams, which weigh 120 or 130 kilograms, the vet would give them an analgesic because they were pretty hard to handle. I do not think the Leader of the House would be able to handle them.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I'd give it a go!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: You would give it a go, but I think you would probably end up getting thrown off the board!

The vet gave the rams an analgesic to settle them about half an hour before they were shorn by the shearers, which was excellent because the rams could then be handled. It takes two people to pull them out of a pen let alone try to shear them. Another example of needing a vet is pregnancy testing, which is now a really important feature in livestock farming because farmers want to maximise their returns. They do not want to feed sheep that are not pregnant. A farmer with 2 000 or 3 000 ewes can ask a vet to run through 500 or 600 sheep an hour with a pregnancy scanning machine. It is very efficient because it can separate the dry ewes from the pregnant ewes. The farmer can then sell the dry ewes or implement a different feeding regime for them. They can also split up the ewes and put them into separate mobs according to whether they are having twins or triplets so that they can be given more feed. Those are the sort of things that have improved farming practices.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Do you just run them through a race?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Yes, they run through a race but next to the race is a shelter with an ultrasound machine. The ultrasound machine goes underneath the ewe and marks it as it comes through the race. At the end of that process, the farmer presses the switch on the drafting gate and they are taken one way or the other. It is quite an efficient operation, and that is one of the values of our country vets. They actually have to be very versatile; they have to handle small dogs and cats and the like in town, then they do sheep pregnancy scanning and artificial insemination with cattle, so there is real variation for our country vets. We certainly value them. I was talking to our local vet this morning. She handles small, large and medium animals. She has practices in both Kojonup and Katanning and employs about five or six other vets. With the current labour shortage, she is looking to employ more, but at this time there are barely any vets. There are good veterinary practices in Esperance, Katanning and Kojonup, and there is one in Narrogin, but then there is really nothing until Perth. It is a profession that is really in demand, and they are really flat out. The local vet mentioned the labour shortage this morning, and the fact that she was looking for qualified vets. I will make further comment about some of the things she spoke about.

When I looked through the *Hansard* of the debate on this bill in the other place, some confusing points arose. I will seek some clarification from the minister's team during the consideration in detail stage, and the minister might like to respond after my contribution. I will quote Hon Alannah MacTiernan from the debate in the other place. The point being discussed was the requirement of having a vet in a practice at all times. There is some real confusion over that point. The minister stated during Committee of the Whole House on 19 August —

There will be regulations made by this Parliament about what is required for the registration of those premises. The intent is that if a vet premises, whether it is a clinic or hospital, is open, there must be a veterinarian present at all times. The view is to allow premises to be open at a variety of times, but the fundamental rule will be if the premises are open, there must be a veterinarian onsite.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas then replied that that was not obvious in the bill, and that veterinarians have a variety of jobs they need to do, both inside and outside the practice.

A *Farm Weekly* article of 14 September, quoting both Hon Alannah MacTiernan and Hon Dr Steve Thomas, states —

He said the legislation needed to be changed so that vets would only be required to be present or contactable to offer advice as required to a vet nurse at their respective practices so they wouldn't be "handcuffed to the office".

However Agriculture and Food Minister Alannah MacTiernan said the State government was not changing the regulation and there was nothing in the legislation that would change the practise.

"This means that regional vets are able to leave their practice for call-outs or other emergencies without breaching regulations—as long as they are onsite for a substantial part of the practice opening hours," Ms MacTiernan said.

"It is important to understand that this requirement for a vet to be on duty will become increasingly important as vet practices can be owned by non-vets."

Really, that is the minister contradicting herself. She said during debate in the other place that, whether it is a hospital or a clinic, a veterinarian must be present at all times, but then she said in the *Farm Weekly* that regional vets would be able to leave their practice for call-outs or other emergencies. I will be seeking some clarity on that from the minister and his advisers, because it is creating confusion. This element of the bill is probably worrying some of our practice owners and vets the most. A solitary vet who owns a small practice and has a qualified vet nurse can be called out to a cow having a calf, or whatever. They have to be out in the paddock, so there is no way that they can be present at the vet practice at the same time. That is what I am worried about. Our concern is whether regulations will be put in place, as the minister said in the other place, to prescribe that. She also said that some exceptions may be made. In the same Committee of the Whole exchange she stated —

For example, maybe there will be a regulation that says when only Chihuahuas are being groomed onsite, the practice can remain open without a veterinarian, but there must be clear signage or something so people are not deceived about the nature of the opening.

That is the sort of contradictory language that is creating confusion in the veterinary sector. She also stated —

...I understand it is accepted that if a vet is on duty but they are called out, it does not constitute a breach of the requirement that there be a vet onsite. The fact that a vet turns up for work, gets a call, "My cow is sick", and races out to the farm, does not constitute a breach of that rule.

This is where the confusion arises. We have one thing being said in the *Farm Weekly* for the purposes of the article, I guess, to try to convince people that everything is running smoothly, but then we have other things recorded in *Hansard* that create a lack of clarity. That is one of the main things I would like to have clarified.

Another of my issues, briefly, is the inspection regime. A pattern seems to be developing of the Minister for Agriculture and Food targeting—I think that is the right word—our rural occupations and, in some cases rightly so, animal welfare and the like. There seems to be a drift towards inspection regimes that are pretty heavy-handed. I spoke about this in debate on the Animal Welfare and Trespass Legislation Amendment Bill 2020—I assume we will discuss the 2021 bill at some point in the future. We do not know the skills of the people inspecting properties; we do not really have clarity on that. We do not know what their qualifications are, and this has really put the wind up many people in the regions, whether they are farmers, vets or otherwise. They want to go about their practices.

We all understand that we need to have good-quality animal welfare practices. The local vet said to me this morning that she operates her practice in a safe way; she would be quite comfortable with someone coming in and inspecting it because she runs a good-quality practice. But as I said, a theme of perhaps unwarranted inspections seems to be developing. The animal welfare bill actually reminded me a bit of the electoral reform bill. A panel was put in place that had already made its decision before it turned up, which was very similar to the processes for the electoral reform bill. Three people who had already published their opinion on electoral reform were put in place to basically come up with the result that the Attorney General was looking for. That is the pattern that seems to be developing with this government: it brings in the right people it needs to get the job done. The animal welfare panel went out into the regions but, basically, the job was wrapped up before it turned up.

As I said, it concerns me that that pattern is developing. What we wanted, as we wanted with the electoral reform bill, was for the panel to look at all submissions from every part of society. With the Constitutional and Electoral Legislation Amendment (Electoral Equality) Bill, Hon Malcolm McCusker—a pre-eminent former Governor—said that he could not really look at all the submissions because many did not fit the terms of reference.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member, you are straying a little from the bill. I know it is the second reading stage, but you are straying a little bit away from the content of the bill.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Yes, I am straying. I am trying to draw attention to a theme that this government seems to be straying into.

The ACTING SPEAKER: It's the "vibe", member.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: The theme really is: let us work out what result we require on animal welfare that relates to the bill and work out what we want. The government did not worry about having a neutral panel; it put people in place to give it the result it wanted. That is the feedback I am getting out in the electorate. The minister knows that my electorate goes from Narrogin, his old farming stamping ground, right across to the other side of Esperance. I get pretty wide and varied feedback from many of my constituents.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Have you ever been to Yilliminning?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Yilliminning—I have.

Mr D.A. Templeman: There are a few people who are still there.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: The Yilliminning dam is there, I think, and a little bit of an opening there.

Mr D.A. Templeman: And a rock.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: There is a dam and a rock. I think Hon Darren West was there a year or two back, handing out something. It is not a bad little spot.

Mr D.A. Templeman: The Labor Party polled very well at Yilliminning. I think there are only two people there!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: As we know, with the COVID situation a lot of people were confused about what they were actually voting for, but they will return to the conservative side of politics.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister, you have diverted the member, who was actually talking about the bill.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: That is right; I was back on it and the minister took me off track.

Mr D.A. Templeman: He's easily distracted!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Madam Acting Speaker, I will not tell any of the stories that I have picked up about the minister back in his younger days at the Kukerin Hotel and places like that.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I might give you some latitude!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: They swept into town and made a big impression, the minister and his troops!

Mr D.A. Templeman: They still talk about us!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: That is right. One member of the Kukerin Golf Club told me a few months ago about your exploits at the Kukerin Hotel. However, I diverge.

Mr D.A. Templeman: What happens on camp, stays on camp, I say.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: That is right; I will not go any further.

Inspection regimes are a concern. As I pointed out earlier, sometimes they are very necessary, but we want clarity on who is going to inspect and what notice will be required. There is a section in the bill about warrants, entry powers and the like, and I will be checking for some clarity on those matters with the minister's advisers when I get that opportunity later this afternoon or whenever the time comes.

Another part of the bill is about impairments, which is an interesting part of the bill and something that I agree with. I think there are some interesting solutions there, if you like, for the new board that will come into the mix. From my perspective, that is positive. Certain elements of the Veterinary Practice Bill can really improve things, like the way in which impairment will be dealt with.

I will go through a few of the items that I think will probably go through relatively smoothly from my perspective. This legislation has been a long time coming. I will look at the history of it. Back in 2003, a legislative proposal was put forward. In 2005, Minister Kim Chance consulted with the board and the then government decided to draft a new bill in 2006–07. Sure enough, there was a change of government on 1 September 2008 before a bill was finalised for cabinet consideration. That took several years. Then on 11 March 2017, the Labor government came into power and machinery-of-government changes created the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development—another one of the super-departments. Nonetheless, DPIRD was established and the government decided to draft a new bill. Here we are today, four years down the track, and the Veterinary Practice Bill is in here. That is 18 years. That is a bit of a concern. I heard Michael from the Parliamentary Education Office today tell the kids from Jerramungup District High School that it takes an average of 142 days for a bill to go through Parliament. Well, it has taken 18 years for this bill to finally find its way here. Obviously, there have been a couple of changes of government in the meantime, so in some way I must at least say well done to the government for knuckling down and getting it to this stage.

There was pretty good consultation on the bill. There was a six-week consultation period in May and June 2020, which included the Veterinary Surgeons' Board, the Veterinary Nurses Council of Australia, many vets and livestock industry bodies, and 102 submissions were received. I would like to think that all those submissions were taken into account, unlike those on the electoral reform bill, because that is what the submission process should be about. Without digressing too much, 184 submissions were received on the electoral reform bill, many of which never saw the light of day.

The ACTING SPEAKER: People were probably waiting for the film, member!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: It was quite upsetting for our regional constituents who had knuckled down and put in submissions to be told, “No, we cannot accept them because they do not fit into the Attorney General’s terms of reference.” Anyway, 102 submissions were received on the Veterinary Practice Bill and there has been strong support for the bill overall. As I said, I did my own consulting with Kate Clayton, the vet from Katanning–Kojonup, who has a very good practice there. I also consulted Craig and Liz Heggaton, who have Genstock. They are widely respected and have a very big farm and regional vet operation south of Kojonup. They have really built up their practice, and farming operations for that matter, over the last 10 or 15 years. They do a lot of pregnancy scanning, artificial insemination, breeding of rams and cropping. They have a comprehensive operation that is certainly at the cutting edge of regional vet practices, if you like.

This bill is about the modernisation of the regulations covering veterinarian practitioners rather than surgeons. It also takes into account issues that were not on the radar a couple of years before COVID came here, such as dealing with remote meetings and some of those types of things. Among the key reforms of the bill, and one which I think is a real positive, is national recognition of veterinarian registration. This is really important. As I mentioned earlier, I spoke to Craig Heggaton of Genstock, who originally came from over east. It is important, when we can get back to New South Wales and Victoria, that we have a real interaction between veterinarians across Australia. Both New South Wales and Victoria have a large contingent of veterinarians with expertise in livestock, and it is important we recognise veterinarian registration throughout Australia. I am pleased that this has come into this business.

As I said earlier, impairment of practitioners is a really important element of this bill. As the minister knows, a lot of professions are under pressure, and in this industry access to drugs and the like is a challenge, but this bill approaches the issue in the right way. The bill will expand the size of the board, and it will be able to deal with this impairment element, rather than sending someone straight off to the State Administrative Tribunal. If the board cannot deal with an impairment issue or it becomes difficult to deal with, it still has the option, I believe, to send someone to the State Administrative Tribunal. This is a real improvement. The only thing that is probably a little disappointing is there is no requirement on that board of eight people to have anyone with a medical background. That issue was raised in the other place. The board will make medical decisions about veterinarians or perhaps veterinarian nurses who may be impaired, but the bill does not require board members to have medical knowledge. That will probably be a question I ask in consideration in detail, because it is quite a challenge when a board is making those types of decisions. I have heard the Premier and the Minister for Health say many times that they rely on medical advice from the Chief Health Officer. In this example, what medical expertise or advice will the board be required to obtain or will board members make a decision off the top of their heads when a person is struggling with drug abuse or whatever?

Mr D.A. Templeman: I am sure they will draw on the appropriate advice, depending on the situation, obviously.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I would like to think so, but I thought this bill was an opportunity to ensure the make-up of this board included medical expertise. In this current environment, it is a challenge to get doctors, so it might be a challenge to get them onto that board. Certainly, as the minister said, the board will have to get that medical advice as it goes along.

The bill addresses a recommendation of a 2015 Productivity Commission report to recognise veterinarians registered in other Australian jurisdictions. WA and the Northern Territory are the only jurisdictions not to have implemented that recommendation at this stage, but, hopefully, after the passing of this legislation WA will be in amongst it.

The other element in this bill that is really important is how it will assist in the management of a large-scale disease outbreak in livestock. I saw the havoc that was created in the industry, probably 12 years ago now, when ovine Johne’s disease came in from the eastern states and infected the sheep flock in the great southern and wheatbelt. The industry needed advice on how Victoria, New South Wales and the like had dealt with OJD. It is a disturbing disease because it is a wasting disease. The sheep are going along fine, then they gradually get skinnier and skinnier through no fault of the grower. They can feed them and do what they like, but the sheep just waste away and die. It spreads from the ground and the pastures. We got veterinarian advice from the other states. Lambs now require vaccination at six or eight weeks. Growers can get around it, but we do not want to repeat the experience of the great southern area, where many farming flocks, though not decimated, lost five to eight per cent of their flock. It is quite upsetting, when everything else is going well and farmers are doing the right thing and feeding their sheep, and all of a sudden their flock gets this wasting disease. It was a real plus to have eastern states’ experience to assist with a large-scale disease outbreak such as OJD. It is the same with bovine Johne’s disease in our cattle. We need that expertise. We certainly do not need that disease, but I can assure members that it is there and now it has to be dealt with. From what I can make of it, vaccinations seem to be handling the disease pretty well and it seems to be back under control.

On the impairment issue, the new board will need to focus on supporting the physical and mental health of veterinarians and veterinarian nurses. I spoke with Kate from Kojonup, who is absolutely flat out. I could hear dogs barking in the background and horses out the back; she is looking for one or two extra veterinarian surgeons. As we know from our puppy farming legislation and the like, many people nowadays have small and large animals, and vets are well and truly required, whether it be in the metropolitan or the regional area.

Part of that impairment discussion for the board will be separating impairment from unprofessional conduct, while mitigating the risk to the consumer. Is it impairment or is it unprofessional conduct? Those will be tough issues for the board to deal with, but the board is a more appropriate place to deal with them than having to go through the State Administrative Tribunal, which is not really the appropriate place. It is really about managing the impairment rather than punitive penalties coming down like a tonne of bricks on someone. There might be other factors—family, depression or whatever it might be—so it is really important for that to be managed properly by the board. As the minister said, formal professional assessments will have to happen. Without that medical expertise, the board will have to get formal professional advice to make sure that, hopefully, that person can come out the other side of it and that there is no risk of injury to either an animal or a person.

One of the other elements in this bill is ownership of veterinary practices. Over time, there will be a tendency for a corporate scenario to come in. The veterinarians I have spoken to were not necessarily against that. They will probably be a little bit concerned if it develops as a trend, but part of that plays back into the earlier matter that I raised about who is actually in charge of the practice. If a corporate owner, who has no qualifications or relationship to being a vet, comes in and buys it, how will that play out? Will the vet, who is now working on a salary, be responsible? Is the corporate owner responsible? Those are the sorts of issues. If the vet who used to be the owner is now on a salary, where does the liability come back on that practice? That is quite an interesting question. As far as attendance in the practice is concerned, when the vet goes into the field to do some work, whose responsibility is it? I would not mind some clarity on that issue.

An element in the bill refers to immediate action orders. If the board is satisfied that there is an imminent risk of injury or harm to any person or animal, it will be able to take an immediate action against a veterinarian or a vet nurse. The board will be able to impose or modify conditions on their registration or even suspend the veterinary practice for a maximum period of 28 days. Apparently, these immediate action orders are found in veterinary legislation in several Australian jurisdictions. That is an important element as well, as it ties in with other states.

Moving on to part 7, “Complaints and discipline”, the bill will reintroduce board powers to deal with minor disciplinary matters, which, as I have said previously, I am in favour of. There is absolutely no point in sending someone to the State Administrative Tribunal for some minor disciplinary matter. That is a waste of everyone’s time and resources. In May 2009, the Standing Committee on Legislation raised concerns about the lack of powers of vocational bodies, such as the Veterinary Surgeons’ Board, to deal with minor disciplinary matters, but this bill will empower the new board to investigate those complaints, have the inquiry and make orders pursuant to the unprofessional conduct. The make-up of the new board will definitely be much more progressive and able to deal with it under this scenario. Certainly, more serious matters will still be referred to the tribunal if necessary, and if the board feels it is important to do so.

An interesting part of the bill covers veterinary nurses. The explanatory memorandum states —

WA is the only jurisdiction in Australia to ... regulate veterinary nurses.

When I spoke to Kate Clayton this morning about veterinary nurses, she was very complimentary of this important part of the bill. Vet nurses should be registered. From her perspective, certainly in places such as England, vet nurses are very highly regarded. They are registered, and she feels that that is certainly a good element. Other jurisdictions are thinking about it, but I think it is not a bad idea. Let us face it: on a lot of occasions, especially in these smaller animal-type vet practices and the like, vet nurses probably get left with much of the work, so, to me, that is certainly an element that will really be an advantage. Importantly, the bill will enshrine in legislation the veterinary nurses regulatory scheme, which is identical to the veterinarians’ one, and it is supported by the Western Australian division of the Veterinary Nurses Council of Australia.

I will move on now to the membership of the board. Currently, there are five members of the board: three vets—two are appointed by election and one is an Australian Veterinary Association nominee; one Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development veterinarian; and one legal practitioner, who is a ministerial appointment. The new board will increase from five to eight members and will include four veterinarians—one elected—one veterinary nurse, one Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development veterinarian, one consumer representative and one legal practitioner. I think the board will be much better balanced. With something like this, it is always important to have more opinions on the table. It is great to see that a veterinary nurse is included. The legal practitioner’s position is the same as in the previous board. That is a really important person to have, and the consumer representative does not go astray either, just to give that on-the-ground experience as to how the person on the street would feel—to have no politics involved or any of that sort of thing. It is really important to make sure that we have an all-round board that can make pretty level-headed decisions. Obviously, the minister will appoint all eight members of the board, including the chair, so, hopefully, the minister will take those recommendations seriously. This is a similar arrangement to other veterinary boards around Australia, so that is a good element.

Those are the main elements that I am concerned with, having been a user of veterinarians in the country in my farming operation. I certainly do not underrate the importance of both regional and metropolitan veterinarians. We can see how attached people get to their small animals and large animals. Unfortunately, two days after I was elected, our border collie, Rex, who had been a loyal servant to our family for 17 years, had to be put down. The vet who came out was fantastic, and I certainly appreciated their professionalism. I guess that was a signal that it was

a changing of the guard or a change of occupation to some extent. My wife went back into school and she was in tears and people asked, “What’s happened? Has there been a re-count? Has Peter lost the election?” She said, “No, we had to put our border collie down.” It was a sad day for our family. The way it was handled taught me how important our vets are to our many families around the state.

Minister, that pretty well sums it up. As I said, we require some clarity. Members of both the Nationals WA and the Liberal Party in the other place are concerned about these regulations and the mixed messaging that we are getting from the Minister for Agriculture and Food about the time that vets will have to spend in their practice to make sure that they comply with the regulations. The minister has said that she is in the process of drafting the regulations and will make sure that is taken into account. As members know, with our limited numbers in both houses, we are worried about whether what has been said will be done. That is probably the main element that concerns our members in the other place. As I have said, some of the other stakeholders with whom we have consulted around the place are generally pretty comfortable with this bill. I am relatively comfortable with the bill, given that we get some further clarity during consideration in detail. As I said in my opening remarks, the opposition will be supporting this bill.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Tourism) [1.41 pm] — in reply: I thank the member for Roe for his contribution to the debate on the Veterinary Practice Bill 2021. I always enjoy the contributions and the banter that the member for Roe and I have, and the furore!

Can I begin by saying this: first of all, as has been highlighted, this bill has had a very long gestation period of nearly two decades in seeking to address the modernisation, essentially, of an act that has been around for about 60 years. The government’s intention to reform and modernise the Veterinary Surgeons Act, and also make it more responsive to modern requirements and needs, is an honourable task, and there is no more honourable person to deliver that to the Parliament and ultimately see that passed than Hon Alannah MacTiernan, for whom I have a great deal of respect. I am very pleased to represent her in this place with regard to matters such as this particular bill.

I will touch on a number of things raised by the member for Roe. I know that the member will probably wish to expand the debate and seek further explanation during consideration in detail.

The first thing that is important to mention is that I am staggered by the statistics that show that Australians more broadly have one of the highest rates of pet ownership in the world. The reality is that many Western Australians of all ages and circumstances will have an interface with a veterinary surgeon or the staff of their local vet at some point, be that because they have a pet, or because they are a primary producer, as is the member for Roe. It is true to say that in modern Western Australia, a lot of people know their local vet well, and I think by and large have a great deal of respect for the compassionate service, if they are a pet owner in particular, that vets provide.

In saying that, I want to highlight that this is my first opportunity to acknowledge a dear friend of mine who has since passed. That is Dr Sean Read. Dr Sean Read ran a very successful veterinary practice in Mandurah for many years. He was the epitome, I suppose, of a vet who was much loved by the people who called upon his services. He was a very hands-on vet. We need to remember that a lot of Mandurah folk are older. A lot of Mandurah folk live by themselves—in a single-person household. Pet ownership not only adds to their health and wellbeing, but of course when times come such as the member for Roe explained about his beloved Rex, and that is faced by all of us who are pet owners, that is a very significant time in our lives. I do not think people can ever underestimate the impact that a loved pet has on family life and on individuals. Dr Sean Read was much loved by many people in Mandurah, because he was a hands-on vet. He was very old school in some ways, because he would do house calls. House calls were his speciality. He would regularly go to the homes of his customers, if you like, at sad times and euthanise their pet or respond to their needs. It was very sad when he passed very suddenly and unexpectedly in Mandurah at the age of 50. This is now probably eight years ago, from memory.

Mrs L.A. Munday: He was a good man.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Yes. It was eight years ago when he passed suddenly, but he is still talked about, such is the legacy that he left. Vale Dr Sean Read. I worked with him in a number of theatre productions. He was one of those people who we surmise never slept. He worked hard during the day, and then he would build sets and perform on stage during the night. It was quite remarkable.

I also want to mention another Mandurah veterinarian and resident, Dr Peter Punch. Dr Peter Punch has also been the chair of the Veterinary Surgeons Board. He ran a successful veterinary practice in Mandurah, until he was unable to continue. Dr Peter Punch has been a fierce advocate for the need to reform the Veterinary Surgeons Act, not only from his experience as a vet, but also for the health and wellbeing of vets more broadly, and for the progression of the veterinary profession.

There are some other elements of this bill that are important. That includes the comments by the member for Roe about how impairment is proposed to be dealt with in a more compassionate and effective way through the provisions in this bill.

It is important to note that whenever I have children for lunch at Parliament House —

Dr D.J. Honey: Are they tasty?

Mr D.A. Templeman: Yes! I invariably ask them, because most of them are at primary school, what sorts of career paths or professions they would like to follow. Being a veterinarian and working with animals in a veterinary practice is high on the list of popularity. There is a deep and abiding interest from people, young people in particular, in following a career path of service to our animal kingdom and doing that in an appropriate and humane way. I think the veterinary industry certainly has a very bright future, not only because of Australia's statistically high proportion of pet ownership, but also more broadly because many Australians have a deep and abiding love for their pets and want to ensure that their pets are healthy and that when something goes wrong, somebody is able to respond to their needs.

It is important that we reflect on some of the provisions in this bill, both in a modernisation and a practicality context. I want to highlight the significant work that has gone into the bill's drafting, and the consultation processes that have led to the bill being before this Parliament. I thank the member for Roe for his support of the bill in Parliament. Some important work was done, and dedication was shown, by a number of people. I mentioned Dr Peter Punch, chairperson of the Veterinary Surgeons' Board, but there was also Dr Sue Godkin, registrar of the VSB, and Fiona Calley, its legal officer. These people made significant contributions during the drafting of the bill. There were also some important instructors on the bill. We want to acknowledge, from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Michelle Wolstenholme and Katy Ashforth, legal officers; Dr Michelle Rodan, chief veterinary officer; Dr Michael Paton, senior veterinary officer; and Dr Skye Badger, veterinary officer. Members will soon meet our very wonderful advisers who will assist me shortly during consideration in detail: Dr Peter Gray, deputy chief veterinary officer, and Ms Avril Bartlett, senior legal officer. We also need to acknowledge the PCO drafters: Una Couper, deputy parliamentary counsel, and Elaine O'Hare and Daniel Nolan, assistant parliamentary counsel. The bill had a very significant concentration of effort to bring it to this place.

In his second reading contribution, the member for Roe, even though he was distracted and meandered a few times, made some important points that I hope I will be able to address, if not in this closing of the second reading debate, then during consideration in detail. I want to address vets being in the practice at all times. Madam Acting Speaker (Ms M.M. Quirk), I seek your guidance. Obviously, a lot of discussion about amendments took place in the other place and it is appropriate for me to officially table the revised explanatory memorandum. I am happy to do it at the end or I will leave that and seek instruction about that. Member for Roe, I will address a couple of things about the veterinarian being on the premises. Under regulation 33 of the Veterinary Surgeons Regulations 1979, a registered veterinarian or other veterinarian in charge must give substantial attendance at the veterinary surgery or clinic during advertised hours of practice. A query was raised in the upper house during consideration of the Veterinary Practice Bill 2021 about whether this requirement will be continued, especially having regard to the onerous nature of this requirement on veterinary practices in regional locations. No clause in the bill addresses this requirement. In response, the minister indicated that there is no intention to change this regulation and that the current practice will continue. However, there is some leeway in how this requirement will be applied. For example, a veterinarian may need to identify when they are available by advertising or signage at the veterinary premises to ensure that clients know when to expect their attendance. It is understandable that there will be times when a veterinarian at the practice gets the call, "I need you out at Rundle's farm" or whoever it is, and obviously that will be priority business. If the practice is multi-use—as an example, veterinary services and grooming services—the new board may consider issuing a code of practice to provide guidance on this issue via circular 1971E, the management, control and operation of veterinary premises.

The member for Roe referred to specific elements of debate on the bill. On 19 August this year, the Minister for Agriculture and Food stated —

We do not want people bringing their animals to a practice that has advertised itself as open only to find that the only thing that can be done for their dying horse is that he gets a wash and a groom. That sort of detail will be a matter for detailed engagement with the industry and the development of regulations. Bear in mind that an element of this is consumer protection and proper, credible practices.

The minister also confirmed that it is accepted that if a veterinarian is on duty but is called out to an emergency, this will not be considered a breach of the requirement that there be a veterinarian on site. I think the minister was pretty clear there. This matter will be subject to further consultation with the industry during the drafting of regulations, especially as the bill provides that third-party non-vet ownership of a veterinary premise will now be available. I am sure we are happy to have further conversations in consideration in detail. The minister gave assurances to, I think, Hon Dr Steve Thomas in the other place that the drafting of these regulations will be subject to consultation. She even said—it was very generous of her—that there would be consultation with Hon Dr Steve Thomas himself! I am not sure whether that is correct. If it is, that is generous. My advisers in the Speaker's gallery are nodding in furious agreement! Hon Alannah MacTiernan is a very generous minister. Given that Hon Dr Steve Thomas is himself a vet, that assurance is solid. The practicalities are that there will be numerous times, possibly during the daily operation of a veterinary practice, that a vet will be required to attend an emergency call. I understand that.

In his contribution, the member for Roe highlighted his acceptance that we might see the "Vets R Us"—type model of operation; almost a franchising arrangement of veterinary practices. I think that was an interesting point. Even in doctors' surgeries in medical practices, we know that various doctors have multiple —

Mr W.J. Johnston: I know one.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I know a few! They are very good doctors indeed. That will probably be something that will be part of how modern veterinary practices evolve over time. It is very important to acknowledge that the quality of service is a primary concern.

The member for Roe mentioned a range of matters relating to acts of veterinary medicine and the term “veterinary medicine”. It is envisaged that, subject to industry and community consultation, some acts of veterinary medicine may change in the future. Certain acts may be excluded or included based on, for example, a change in technology and needs. I am advised that it is not possible to exhaustively set out in the bill what acts of veterinary medicine will be excluded from the operation of the legislation into the future. This is a rapidly changing area of science and community and industry expectation. This matter was raised in regard to practices relating to livestock and production animals. I am advised that practices relating to livestock and production animals that have in the past been undertaken by non-veterinarians and that were previously considered acceptable are increasingly raising animal welfare concerns. However, on the other hand, there is an increasingly significant decline in rural veterinary services and remote accessibility to veterinary practices, as the member for Roe highlighted in his second reading contribution. It is therefore expected that some medical or surgical procedures on animals may be drawn within the realms of veterinary science, while others are taken out of it to be undertaken by non-veterinarians. These could be subject to specific technology, animal welfare considerations and conditions.

The member delved into the pregnancy issues of animals, including sheep and cattle. An example given is that the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development is currently consulting with industry and the community about pregnancy testing and spaying of cattle. Depending on the outcome, these practices may be taken out of or included in the definition of “veterinary medicine”, so long as they are undertaken by certain persons in specific circumstances to address animal welfare considerations. This may result in large corporate farming businesses employing personnel who are experienced in pregnancy testing, rather than requiring veterinary services to perform this function.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 4632.]

**VISITORS — NEWBOROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL, YULUMA PRIMARY SCHOOL
AND WANNEROO PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.01 pm]: I want to acknowledge some students who are with us today. On behalf of the member for Scarborough, I would like to acknowledge the student leaders and staff from Newborough Primary School and Yuluma Primary School. On behalf of the member for Wanneroo, I would like to welcome representatives from Wanneroo Primary School and P&C.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

COMMUNITY MIDWIFERY PROGRAM

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

I refer to the email sent last week to mothers intending to give birth through the community midwifery program that states that due to workforce shortages, care may be handed to labour ward midwives in the coming months.

- (1) How many women in the CMP will have their birth plan changed due to these shortages?
- (2) How many midwives short are we in the state at this point?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) I am not familiar with the correspondence that the member refers to; however, I can say that all health systems are subject to workforce shortages at this stage, and we are not orphans in that. Every healthcare system across the nation is struggling to attract workforce because, traditionally, Australian health systems rely upon overseas-trained doctors and nurses to come in and fill places that cannot be filled by Australian-trained doctors and nurses. As the member knows, we are short of midwives both in the private and the public sector.

The community midwifery program is a great program that allows mothers to have continuity of care from midwives right through the birthing process. Obviously, if there are constraints in relation to workforce shortages, sometimes those particular models of care cannot always be fulfilled. I can say that since January this year, we have an extra 15 midwives practising in the system, as well as an expansion of the current program, which will see a range of midwives taken on. For instance, 69 undergraduate applications have been received, with 62 of those being offered, so we are increasing the number of nurse graduates going into the midwifery stream. We are continuing to attract a number of midwives who have fallen out of their careers, and we are providing them with refresher courses. There are five granted agreements in relation to the refresher course.

A lot of work is being undertaken at the moment to boost the number of midwives in our system. It is a system under strain, and part of that strain is the constraints we have in our nursing and midwifery workforce, but as the member can see, we are making significant progress in making sure that we can increase those numbers so that we can continue to provide the services that mothers in Western Australia rightly deserve.

COMMUNITY MIDWIFERY PROGRAM

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

I have a supplementary question. Can the minister confirm that there have just been 40 additional midwives since the McGowan government has come to office, and to what extent has this been an issue beyond the last 12 months?

The SPEAKER: Sorry, that is for just one question. You have asked two questions. Minister, I just direct you to answer the first question.

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I can confirm that since coming to government, there has been a 12.9 per cent increase in the number of nurses and midwives practising in our system. Under the Labor government, there has been an increase in the overall workforce. The only time over the last eight years when we have seen the nursing and midwifery workforce decrease was under the previous government. We will continue to make sure that we can attract great nurses and midwives to practise their craft in our health system, because it is a world-class health system that is providing great service under difficult circumstances.

CORONAVIRUS — MANDATORY VACCINATION POLICY

626. Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI to the Premier:

I refer to the state government's safe and proportionate approach to managing the risk of COVID-19 in the community. Can the Premier update the house on the government's mandatory vaccination policy and outline what it will mean for businesses and workers in Western Australia?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for Kingsley for the question. Today we have announced a big step forward in our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is true that we are already on track to rapidly increase our vaccination rate in Western Australia, but today's announcement should increase that as well. By the end of this week, we expect that we will have 60 per cent of the eligible population—that is, people over 12 years of age—fully vaccinated in Western Australia, which is a terrific outcome. Other states are measuring people over 16 years of age; we are measuring people over 12 years of age. This is a great achievement by our health professionals and the Western Australian community, considering the supply issues and geographic challenges in Western Australia. However, the threat of COVID is not going away. We need to have as many people vaccinated as possible.

Today we have announced an overarching mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy. This policy strengthens the current mandates. It covers the next group of industries required to be mandated across the state. We estimate that it will account for about 75 per cent of the Western Australian workforce. This policy is based on the public health risk and is proportionate and reasonable. The first group of people that will be required to have their first vaccine by 1 December and then be fully vaccinated by the end of the year includes resource workers, healthcare workers, community care workers, cross-border freight workers, the whole of the WA Police Force, Department of Fire and Emergency Services workers, corrective services workers, those who work in Aboriginal communities, and abattoir and meat processing workers. The second group that will be required to have its first vaccine by the end of this year and be fully vaccinated by the end of January next year includes those people who work in supermarkets, grocery stores, bakeries, petrol stations, hardware stores, all of hospitality, the building and construction industries, child care and day care, hotels and other accommodation, financial institutions and schools—although people in schools will be required to be vaccinated before they start school next year. The third group relates to a lockdown, and if there is a lockdown, these people will be required to have had two doses. They are people who work in bottle shops; newsagents; pet stores; wholesalers; government or local government services, when working from home is not possible; repair services and roadside assistance; forestry; primary industries; factories; manufacturing, fabrication and production; and all members of the Western Australian Parliament and their staff. It is very important that we set a good example. This is a pretty unusual measure that we have taken today—unprecedented in our lifetime—but it is very important that we do everything we can to protect the vulnerable, to make sure that our industries can continue to operate and to protect the health of Western Australians across the board. I urge all Western Australians to get vaccinated as soon as they possibly can.

CORONAVIRUS — MANDATORY VACCINATION POLICY

627. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:

I refer to the announcement that the Premier has just been outlining in relation to the government's mandatory COVID-19 policy for Western Australia's workforce. Given the government is now using a big-stick approach to get our vaccination rate up because the government has failed using other methods, when can we expect to see a road map that outlines a time line for safely reopening our borders?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

They never stop criticising our approach to dealing with COVID, and that has occurred over the course of the last two years. It has been a highly stressful and difficult period, yet the Liberals and Nationals in Western Australia never stop whining and whingeing and criticising. At the height of the pandemic last year, whilst we were trying to keep Western Australia safe, they were demanding that we allow COVID into WA, and they joined Clive Palmer in his efforts in the High Court. That is what the Liberal Party did. Ever since then, they have continued to attack and criticise.

Our vaccination rate is, basically, the same as Queensland's and ahead of the Northern Territory's and maybe a couple of percentage points behind South Australia's. They are comparable jurisdictions to Western Australia in that they are large states with relatively small populations and extended over a large area. We are all COVID-free. Naturally, we are not going to be vaccinated as quickly as New South Wales and Victoria, which got millions of extra doses per capita months before the rest of us. The idea is that somehow we should have the same vaccination rate when New South Wales got millions of extra doses of Pfizer early, on a number of occasions; and it had a massive outbreak, which obviously drove vaccination rates; and the rules were changed in New South Wales to allow quicker dosage between the two doses, but all those things have added up to New South Wales being vaccinated quicker than the rest of us. That is understandable. I do not understand why the Liberals and Nationals cannot understand that simple fact.

Some of Western Australia's issues involve remote Aboriginal communities, which are the commonwealth's responsibility. The vaccination rates there are very low. The commonwealth took on that responsibility. We want to help them. I understand why it is difficult. I am not attacking the commonwealth over it. I am making the point it is more difficult to do that. We will continue to put in place innovative measures to deal with the situation. I am advised that there are lines to get vaccinated at the shopping centres in Mirrabooka and Armadale. We have a hundred or so clinics around regional WA and we are going to put in place some extremely innovative measures to get more and more people vaccinated. But, by the end of this week, 60 per cent of over-12 Western Australians will have had both doses—and we are counting the 12 to 16-year-olds that the other states are not counting because I think they count. Our kids count. They should not be excluded from the measures. It makes it easier for New South Wales and Victoria to say that they got to higher level when they do not count kids. We are counting kids. It never made sense to me that kids were not counted.

There will be lots of innovation, but today's announcement is a tough decision, a hard decision, really quite an unusual decision, but it is something that we have had to do. I just remind everyone when you are at school, you get vaccinated. When you are a baby, you get vaccinated. This is what happens in our society and it has happened for decades to prevent terrible illnesses afflicting us throughout the course of our lives. When people work in aged care and hospitals, they are required to have a flu vaccine. This is not an unusual thing compared with that. I urge everyone across the state who is unhappy about vaccinations to think about it in that context. We have been doing it with children for decades, probably the best part of 100 years, and it has prevented millions of deaths.

CORONAVIRUS — MANDATORY VACCINATION POLICY

628. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. The question was actually: when can we expect to see a road map that outlines a time line for safely reopening our borders now that the government has brought in mandatory vaccination for a large percentage of our population with dates attached to that?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

Most of our borders are open. I will explain it to the opposition again. We are open to South Australia, the Northern Territory and, from Friday, Queensland and Tasmania. We are open. People can go there. You can go there, if you like. If you want to go to South Australia, go to South Australia, just get the G2G PASS. We are not open to Victoria and New South Wales because they are rife with COVID. We will set a date when it is appropriate to do so. What I do not want is to set a date that is wrong. We will set a date when it is right, which is based upon health advice and allows us to stay as safe as we can for as long as we can while we get our citizens vaccinated.

As I said to the Leader of the Opposition yesterday—this is very repetitive with the complaining she was doing yesterday—Queensland is opening to New South Wales and the like. If we did that and had COVID come in before Christmas, we could very well have restrictions on restaurants, cafes, bars, holidays, travel, mask wearing, all that sort of thing, over the entire Christmas holidays. I do not want to do that. I know some people are advocating for that. I do not want to do that. Imagine if that happens. Then the opposition would say, “Why did you allow the border to come down?” That is what it would do and that is what the press would do. A lot of journalists who are demanding we do it would suddenly say, “Why did you do that?” Governments have to be responsible. We have to make decisions based upon medical advice. We have to do the right thing by the people of the state, and that is what we are doing.

CORONAVIRUS — MANDATORY VACCINATION POLICY

629. Mr T.J. HEALY to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the state government's mandatory vaccination policy that was announced earlier today.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house why the decision to mandate vaccinations for certain workers and industries has been taken?

- (2) Can the minister outline to the house the engagement that is being undertaken with industry and stakeholders implementing this policy?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) I would like to thank the member for the question; it is a very important one. As the member would be aware, earlier today we made an announcement around mandatory vaccination and this is based upon the latest health advice. The state government has today, as the Premier said, announced an overarching mandatory COVID-19 framework that will see a phased approach around mandatory occupations and workforces within Western Australia. This is a very important measure to make sure that we continue to drive up vaccination rates within the community and meet our number one priority, which is keeping Western Australians safe.

As a result of keeping Western Australians safe, we have been able to keep our economy open and keep people in the workplace. In addition to this, we will be mandating the different cohorts of workers. Group 1 has to be first dosed by 1 December and fully vaccinated by 31 December. These are industries determined to have high transmission risk or are a vulnerability risk or are critical to the safety of the community. The second group, which has to be first dosed by 31 December and fully vaccinated by 31 January, are industries and workers deemed critical to the ongoing delivery of business and the function of the community. These two groups represent about 60 per cent of our workforce. The final group is the lockdown group, which is those people who will be required to be fully vaccinated in the event that there is a lockdown. We say to people in these industry sectors: get yourself vaccinated now because in the event that we have a lockdown, you will not be allowed to go to work unless you are fully vaccinated.

Earlier today, I briefed representatives of industry, employers, employees and industry leaders on the government's announcement today, and I think it is fair to say that it was widely and positively received, but there are a lot of questions. There are a lot of questions and, of course, a lot of different settings in which people work, both physical settings and regulatory settings, particularly in the industrial relations context. The government has undertaken to have a series of round tables over the coming week or two weeks when we will sit down with industry leaders so that we can answer their detailed questions and, through that dialogue, inform ourselves and the legal teams we have working in this space to make sure that the directions we put in place are relevant and effective for those particular industry sectors. I think this is the commitment that they most widely welcomed—the opportunity to sit down with the government and make sure that they have an input in how we can best make sure that we can protect their industries, their workers and their customers or their clients.

I think this is a hallmark of a government that is prepared to do the hard work, to sit down and work in partnership with our industry leaders and partners to make sure that we can have an effective response to COVID-19. The response has been effective to date and we will continue that to make sure that we work in partnership with these industry groups to ensure that we are working together, because we are all in this together and together we will get through this.

CORONAVIRUS — HEALTH MODELLING

630. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:

In the absence of a road map for safely reopening our state, will the Premier release the health modelling that has been provided showing the impacts on our hospital system, any legal advice and any other metrics that he is using to make decisions to mandate vaccinations and for future plans to reopen our borders safely?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

The advice provided by the Chief Health Officer has already been published, or will be published later on today, so that is a standard occurrence. I remember all of last year Liza Harvey asking me where the advice was and I would show her it was on the website and then she would say, “Where’s the advice?” It was a common thing. It did not matter how many times I said, “Here’s the advice” and I gave it to her; she said, “Where’s the advice?” People will remember that. I do not know why, when I gave her the advice, she did not realise I was giving her the advice. But I gave her the advice all the time and I advised her it was the advice, but she did not seem to understand it was the advice.

First of all, we have tabled that. Secondly, I have advised the member that our expectation is that the border arrangements in relation to New South Wales and Victoria will not come down until next year. I have advised her of that repeatedly. That is the plan. I know some people are saying that we should open for Christmas. I saw the Prime Minister say that a month or so ago. It is an artificial deadline. Christmas is lovely, and I would personally love to go with my family and spend Christmas with my mother and father and my brother and his wife and children in New South Wales. I would love that; that would be great, but I cannot, because if we were to do that, we would run the risk of importing the virus into Western Australia before we get to that extremely high level of vaccination that we want to have. We would then have to put in place public health safety measures, which would cost a lot of people a lot of enjoyment over the Christmas period here in WA and also potentially cost businesses a huge amount of income at their highest earning period in the year.

As I said yesterday, Queensland is different. It relies heavily on the southern states' tourism market, whereas that is not the case here. What would dramatically impact businesses here is if we had importation of the virus prior to Christmas and then had to put in place public health safety measures. Each state is different. That is probably why we are a Federation—each state is different. The longer members go in this political life, the more they realise that states are different. Each state has different nuances and perhaps ours are greater than those of any other state in Australia. Perhaps we are the most different of all the states.

It will be next year. In terms of legal advice, no government has ever tabled the legal advice on these things. Just so the member understands, that is the past practice of all governments. In terms of modelling and those sorts of things, when we are able to provide a further defined date for New South Wales and Victoria, obviously we will provide further advice in relation to that.

CORONAVIRUS — HEALTH MODELLING

631. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Thank you, Premier; I have read the health advice relating to the announcement you made today.

Mr D.J. Kelly: Is that a question?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I do not need your help, Minister for Water—I absolutely do not.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Water, you do not have the call. Please do not interrupt.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: The question was: why is the Premier refusing to release health modelling that has been provided to the government in relation to the impact of COVID coming into the state?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

There is always ongoing work because the situation changes over time. I note that a range of advice from the commonwealth, through the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity, has been provided and released regularly. But it is modelling; it is an estimate. When the Doherty advice has come out, it has shown that if states open too early, large numbers of people will die and the hospitals could potentially be overrun in all states of Australia, as they have been in New South Wales and Victoria, and there would be terrible economic outcomes as well, which is the Treasury advice on these things. We will table all this—the information upon which we rely—in due course when we set a date for New South Wales and Victoria.

I understand it is difficult for some people. As I said, it is difficult for me. But I actually think that 95 per cent of Western Australians would prefer not to have COVID deliberately imported into Western Australia prior to having a very high level of vaccination. That is my view of where the public is at. Clearly, the Liberals and Nationals have a different view by the tone of the member's question, as they have had over the course of the last two years. If the Liberals and Nationals had had their way, we would have had the New South Wales situation. Have a look at it. I just say to the people of Western Australia: thank God we did not go there.

JOBS — TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

632. Ms D.G. D'ANNA to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's strong record of providing more job opportunities for Western Australians through its pipeline of transport and infrastructure projects.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on how the state government is using its record transport infrastructure investment to deliver more opportunities for Aboriginal businesses and workers?
- (2) Can the minister outline how these efforts are supporting local communities across Western Australia?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Kimberley for that question. Today I attended the first Meet the Buyer and Supplier Forum for Aboriginal businesses and road and rail contractors. We have amalgamated all the infrastructure spend in the transport portfolio and today we hosted a Meet the Buyer and Supplier Forum at which Aboriginal businesses got to speak directly to the contractors delivering our record asset investment program. Over 83 Aboriginal businesses were represented today and every major contractor was there. It was an opportunity for more Aboriginal businesses to directly talk to those who are delivering our record infrastructure spend. There were over 400 attendees today—a record number of attendees at these types of forums. It was great to hear some of the stories. We now have, across the state, Aboriginal businesses proactively working with contractors, employing Aboriginal people and delivering a record amount of infrastructure spend through Aboriginal businesses. We have set a target of over \$700 million for Aboriginal businesses over the next five years and 3.5 million work hours completed by Aboriginal workers.

Member for Kimberley, we have been up there a few times already and we have seen the number of local Aboriginal people employed on our road contracts throughout the Kimberley. We want to replicate that, and we are trying to replicate that throughout regional WA. It is not just in the major contracts; it is also

in road maintenance. For example, about five years ago in the Kimberley, probably less than 10 per cent of the maintenance crew were Aboriginal workers. We now have that at over 60 per cent. It is an incredible result, in particular in maintenance. This is what happened many, many years ago—decades ago—before there was widespread contracting out. The Main Roads local maintenance crew was very much dependent on Aboriginal workers. People from the country looked after the roads in that area. That is something we are very much aspiring to now replicate. We are bringing back what happened all those decades ago when the local Aboriginal people looked after the roads on country. This is something we are very, very passionate about. I was very pleased; it was so heartening to see over 80 Aboriginal businesses represented from all over regional WA and metropolitan Perth. We see this as a huge opportunity to continue the growth of Aboriginal employment.

The forum was hosted today by our good friend the former Treasurer, Ben Wyatt. It was great to see the former Treasurer, who used to hate my infrastructure spending, now absolutely celebrating my infrastructure spending! After resisting it and combating it for all those years, he was celebrating it, as I mentioned at the forum today. It was a great turnout. It is very much a passion of the whole transport team—Main Roads, the Public Transport Authority and Metronet. Again, there is a lot more work to be done, particularly on maintenance. We will be making further announcements that will see the direct employment of more Aboriginal regional workers in WA.

Ms S.E. Winton interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo, are you wanting to ask a question?

POLICE — EXMOUTH AND CORAL BAY

633. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Minister for Police:

I note the large surge in population up to 50 000 in Exmouth and surrounding communities like Coral Bay and the Ningaloo coast and many stations housing tourists in peak periods.

- (1) What is the current number of police in full-time equivalents at the Exmouth Police Station who cover this large area and population?
- (2) Has the minister been approached by the Shire of Exmouth or the communities of Exmouth and Coral Bay requesting that additional resources be transferred to Exmouth to support keeping the community safe in peak periods?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for his question. With respect to specific numbers, I suggest member put that on notice. Clearly, I do not carry around with me or can say off the top of my head the FTE at every police station in the state. I am going to most of them before Christmas. From all the ones that I have been to, I have a reasonable idea of what the FTEs are. I have not yet gone to Exmouth. I have been to Carnarvon, Kalbarri, Mullewa, Mingenew and Morawa in the member's electorate, but not that particular police station. I can say that I have not personally been approached by those towns. Whether or not there is correspondence to that regard, I could not say.

POLICE — EXMOUTH AND CORAL BAY

634. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Minister for Police:

I have a supplementary question. When can the community expect additional resources to deal with the influx of tourists that is infiltrating places like Exmouth and the Ningaloo coast?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please, members. Order, please! Member, you have asked one question; that is what you are permitted as your supplementary.

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

The member's question reminds me of his strident advocacy to roadblock Exmouth last year. He demanded the government block the roads to Exmouth last year. I remember very clearly the strident advocacy from the member opposite on behalf of the community. He wanted a wall to wall out everybody from Perth. Now, clearly that is not a priority for the member.

What I can say, member, is that the Commissioner of Police—for whom I have great admiration and respect and I believe is doing a wonderful job on behalf of state—is responsible for the allocation of resources that we provide. The state government is providing more resources to police than ever before in the history of this state and well in excess of anything provided when the member was in government. Over the last four years or so, it has been more than \$1 billion in excess of what was allocated to police when the member was last in government. We are in the process of recruiting more police officers over a four-year period than at any time in history. It commenced last year with 350 officers above attrition and 200 above attrition every single year now and in the next three financial years. Of course, when those officers graduate from the Western Australian Police Academy, as they do on an incredibly regular basis—

I am attending graduations almost monthly—they are allocated to sites as required by the police commissioner. The police commissioner determines where the requirements for police officers are and where the resources will be allocated. It is our responsibility, which we are more than fulfilling, to provide the police commissioner with every resource that he requires. Undeniably, police are better resourced, supported and staffed, and getting more recruits than at any time before and certainly far in excess of the former Liberal–National government’s inadequate performance.

MYSTERY ROAD — KALGOORLIE ELECTORATE

635. Ms A.E. KENT to the Minister for Culture and the Arts:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government’s commitment to diversify the economy through its unprecedented support for Western Australia’s film and television industry.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the filming of series 3 of the successful *Mystery Road*?
- (2) Can the minister outline to the house what local productions such as this mean for our local economy, in particular jobs for our creative arts sector?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

- (1)–(2) Yes, yes, yes—the infiltrators. As an aside to “The Infiltrator”—it sounds like a good movie—I was in Exmouth on Saturday morning. I can tell the member for North West Central one thing that the shire and the chamber of commerce were telling me was how appreciative they are of the fact that so many Western Australians are visiting that wonderful part of Western Australia and the support that activity is giving to businesses. I can tell the member that that is what they were telling me on Saturday morning when I was in Exmouth. Sorry; it was Friday afternoon when I was in Exmouth.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for North West Central, this is not your question. I ask you to desist from interjecting.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The state of Western Australia, as we know, has been investing heavily —

The SPEAKER: Minister, I think we might have fewer interjections if you direct your comments to me.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Yes; thank you, Madam Speaker.

As members would be very aware, the WA McGowan government is very much focused on growing the creative industries in Western Australia. We have continued to invest heavily in our screen industry. It is wonderful that during these COVID times Western Australia’s activity in filming screen and television documentaries and series continues. As we speak, that is continuing through *Mystery Road* series 3. It is being filmed in the member for Kalgoorlie’s magnificent electorate, of course. We cannot underestimate—I am sure the member for Kalgoorlie does not underestimate—the impact and importance of filming in our regional country towns on local economies. We know that not only do they bring production teams, actors and performers into those communities, but also the procurement of much of the services is localised so that during the filming program local businesses benefit—hospitality businesses, accommodation et cetera.

This is a very, very important investment in the screen industry. In the case of the *Mystery Road* series, there have been two series. Series 1 was filmed in Kununurra and Wyndham, in the East Kimberley. Series 2 was filmed in Broome. This series is being filmed in the goldfields and Esperance. When the series are seen worldwide—viewers are in the millions—we are also showcasing Western Australia. When people see series 3, they will see backdrops of the magnificent golden outback, our goldfields history and our ancient land, of course, which celebrates our First Nations people. This has a direct impact on local businesses, economies and creatives because, as the member knows—she is very supportive of the film and television industry—the government has gone one step further in growing this industry as a genuine contributor to the Western Australian economy. Of course, that is our announcement of building a film studio. There is a \$105 million commitment to the film studio, with a \$120 million investment fund that sits alongside that. It will mean that we will be able to attract even more diversity of series, including blockbuster movies through to series like *Outback Truckers* and *Mystery Road* to name a few. This is very important for our economy and the creative industries. It means that young people from regional WA—a young woman studying acting at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts or a young person studying the technical side of things at WAAPA, at one of our TAFEs or a university—will have a journey mapped out in front of them and there will be the likelihood that they will not only train here, but also work here in the film and screen industry. That is brilliant for Western Australia, the creative industries and our economy. Who is delivering it? The McGowan government. I am very proud to see us delivering that, Madam Speaker.

MANDURAH RAIL LINE — CLOSURE — SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

636. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the planned closure of the Mandurah rail line during the upcoming holiday period and concerns voiced by the Lord Mayor regarding the impact on the CBD.

- (1) Does the minister concede that alternative transport arrangements will impact negatively on the 60 000 passengers who rely on this line each day?

- (2) Has the minister tasked Transperth with modelling changes to transit times for these interrupted services?
- (3) Will the minister give a firm guarantee that works will be completed within the scheduled time frame?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: It would appear that a lot of other people think that they can answer this question. I would just like the Minister for Transport to answer.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

- (1)–(3) I was somewhat surprised by those comments. In relation to the disruption caused by building rail lines, that is what happens when rail lines are built! As I have outlined before, when the previous Liberal–National government was in power, it did not cause disruption to the rail lines because it did not build any. Members may ask: what disruption did the former government cause when it built the Ellenbrook rail line? Nothing. What disruption occurred when it built Metro Area Express light rail? Nothing, because it kept breaking commitments. Of course, the closure of a rail line to make a significant change around Cockburn station is something that is required to build the Thornlie–Cockburn Link. Do the members for Southern River and Jandakot want us to build that Thornlie–Cockburn Link? What do the people of Canning Vale want? They want the Thornlie–Cockburn Link of course. As a result, there will be a closure of that rail line.

Transperth has been working to develop the plans for the replacement bus services. It undertook a community survey and thousands of people were interviewed and we have discussed alternative arrangements. We have identified the key employment centres, like Fiona Stanley Hospital, making sure we have dedicated services linking to Fiona Stanley Hospital and other key activity centres. All that is being planned, and very soon there will be a significant communication of those programs.

I tell members what else is happening on 1 January. We are reducing the cost of travelling into the city by hundreds of dollars—thousands of dollars for many people. Are the people who are saying that that closure is going to have an impact now saying that they want to contribute to the fact that we are reducing the cost of travelling into the city? That commitment is not for three or four weeks; it is forevermore. From 1 January, the highest price that a person will be paying to get into the city will be a two-zone fare. How does that change the economics? It changes it a lot. As I have outlined in many responses to that curious claim that somehow we have to subsidise the Perth city council for this, at the same time, on 1 January, we will be bringing down the price of catching public transport into the city by thousands of dollars for people. That will affect everybody. On top of that, we are building new train lines to make it easier to get into the city. We are building the Ellenbrook rail line and the extension to Yanchep, we are extending the rail line to Byford and we have the Thornlie–Cockburn Link—all these new train services. Again, I do not hear the same person or the same council saying, “Let’s contribute to that”, because we are bringing more people into the city at a cheaper price. We are transforming the system. All those people who want to complain, like the opposition does on everything—whether it be the management of COVID or keeping WA safe—will see that this is a complete transformation of our rail network. As I said, there will be disruption, but when you build roads, when you build rail, there will be disruption. We are working very constructively with the key employment centres, with everyone, to make sure that we have a plan for alternative bus services.

MANDURAH RAIL LINE — CLOSURE — SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

637. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Transport:

I have a supplementary question. I note the minister’s refusal to commit to ensuring that this work is done on time. Will there be the latent bus capacity to cope in the event that the line continues to be shut when school returns and everybody is back at work?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

As I said, we have a plan. It is a very good plan, and we will be releasing the details very soon in relation to the ability to transport people.

Mr R.S. Love: Will it work in February? Will it work in March?

Mr D.A. Templeman: We build railways; you close them, mate!

Mr R.S. Love: Very slowly it seems.

Mr D.A. Templeman: What about your tier 3s? You close everything! That’s all you do!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the House, thank you! I would ask you to draw the supplementary answer to a close, please, minister.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I have not spoken yet!

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Armadale!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Let us go through the opposition's record. There was a former member for Southern River who, at each election, promised the Thornlie–Cockburn link; it was never delivered. Then it was said that it was not delivered because the seat was not marginal enough. That is how the Liberal–National government did transport planning. The Leader of the Liberal Party a couple of weeks ago at Liberal council said that it is opposed to the subsidisation of public transport. Then we have the Nationals WA. Have members checked the car park? There are still those negative stickers criticising Metronet.

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: They are still on the car. There is still one of those nasty, attacking, divisive, awful little stickers on those cars. Do not come in here attacking Metronet every day of the week, and then somehow try to pretend that they care about public transport, because no-one believes the member for Moore. I am proud that we are delivering the biggest transformation of our public transport system in the state's history, and of course the two-zone cap comes into effect on 1 January.

TJUNTJUNTJARA INDIGENOUS LAND USE AGREEMENT

638. Ms A.E. KENT to the Minister for Lands:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to working with Aboriginal people to drive social, cultural and economic development in their communities. Can the minister outline to the house what the landmark Indigenous land use agreement between the Spinifex native title holders and the state government will mean for Aboriginal people living in the Tjuntjuntjara community, including the economic, social and cultural benefits it will deliver?

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

I thank the member for Kalgoorlie. It is great to have someone positive on the other side of the chamber, although she is not on "that side". There should be a vaccination against negativity. I really believe the opposition needs it.

Mr V.A. Catania: Is there one for arrogance?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please! Members and minister! Minister, I ask you not to invite anymore interjections. I would love to hear the answer to your question.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Thank you. The Minister for Culture and the Arts was talking about the movie industry. I believe it will be making a film about *The Last Supper*, starring the member for North West Central as Judas!

I thank the member for Kalgoorlie for her question. During the winter recess, along with my colleague the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Hon Stephen Dawson, we took a trip to the Tjuntjuntjara community, which as the member knows is a very remote community near the South Australian border. It was a fantastic experience where he and I signed an agreement with the Spinifex people. The community is located on the western side of the A-class Great Victoria Desert, and it has been there since 1988. Because it is on an A-class reserve but never had a reputable land tenure interest, the community has been prevented from seeking investment for critical infrastructure—therefore, to try to establish its community and economic, social and cultural development. To sign that Indigenous land use agreement with the Tjuntjuntjara community was obviously a turning point in its ability to improve its economic, social and cultural capacity. That has now been lodged with the National Native Title Tribunal. Once it is registered, that will then provide a lease in perpetuity to the Spinifex people of that region. That lease, which the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and I signed, has now been registered with the National Native Title Tribunal and will allow them to advance their commercial, economic and community interest. Of course, it will provide them with financial benefit in due course.

It is a great opportunity for the Spinifex people now to have a greater say in their ability to map out their future, and also provide opportunities in the tourism industry. I recommend it to people. It is a very isolated community, considered one of the most isolated communities in Western Australia, but I think there is great potential now with this new land tenure format. It is another example of the McGowan government doing great work in Closing the Gap with Aboriginal people and very remote communities in Western Australia.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Liberal Party with the last question.

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE — LEGISLATION

639. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Premier:

I refer to the commonwealth inquiry report, *A way forward*, into the Jun—Juukan Gorge incident, and I quote —

In light of the criticisms of the operation of the current and proposed Western Australian legislation, the Committee considers that the Commonwealth Government has a role in legislating for minimum cultural heritage protection standards.

How will the Premier prevent the federal government from filling the void on cultural heritage legislation given his failure to introduce, prioritise and pass appropriate state-based legislation?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

Just so we all understand, it is the Juukan Gorge. The decision to allow for the mining of the Juukan Gorge was made by Hon Peter Collier, who is the leader of your party! That is the first point, but it is relevant. When the member comes in here carrying on about an issue that a member of his party is responsible for, don't you think that is a relevant consideration? I think that is something that people needed to know—a bit like they needed to know the actual name of the cave, rather than the member's interpretation of it.

The Aboriginal heritage legislation was passed by the Tonkin government in 1972, which puts it at nearly 50 years old. It was revolutionary legislation for its time, but over time there has been criticism of it in that it has not provided sufficient opportunity and say for Indigenous people, particularly the traditional owners in the areas where activities take place. Therefore, there has been a range of attempts to try to overhaul it and put in place new legislation, including by the last government. Those attempts failed. When we came to office, we started a consultation program on this. What members need to understand with these issues is that a huge amount of consultation needs to go on before we can bring forward legislation. That process went on under the former minister, Ben Wyatt, and continued under the current minister, Hon Stephen Dawson. We hope to be able to introduce legislation shortly. That process is being finalised, with the expectation and hope to introduce legislation shortly.

The thing about legislation in this area is that not everyone will agree. Coming up with legislation that has everyone's approval and agreement is not actually possible in this area. But we will come up with modern legislation that provides for enhanced opportunities for a proper say by Aboriginal people, which will be a significant improvement on the legislation that is currently in place.

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE — LEGISLATION**640. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Premier:**

I have a supplementary question. How does the government intend to undertake timely consultation on, and oversee, cultural heritage issues in Western Australia given the Premier's short-sighted decision to abolish the Department of Aboriginal Affairs?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

This is without doubt the most lightweight opposition in the history of this state, and probably in any state—the six of you are absolutely hopeless!

Obviously, when we came to office, we made some changes to the administration of the state. It was widely supported in the Aboriginal community to put the roles and functions of that department into the Department of the Premier and Cabinet—widely supported. The consultation process on the legislation has been run by the staff who do this work within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet over the course of this period of time. I repeat: it is not easy to come up with legislation that has had the widespread consultation that is necessary but also receives agreement from everyone. It will not actually, in my view, be possible that everyone agrees, but the legislation we will come up with will be a huge improvement on the current legislation. It would be great if the opposition was constructive in this and not divisive. The former Leader of the Liberal Party, Zak Kirkup, indicated to Ben Wyatt last term that he wanted to be constructive and helpful when legislation came forward; he wanted to work cooperatively. All those processes will go on to make sure the opposition is fully aware of what is being provided when the legislation is finalised, but this important issue is something on which we need cooperation and bipartisanship rather than divisiveness.

The SPEAKER: That concludes question time.

VETERINARY PRACTICE BILL 2021*Explanatory Memorandum — Correction — Statement by Speaker*

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.54 pm]: I have received advice that the explanatory memorandum for the Veterinary Practice Bill 2021, tabled on 9 September 2021, contains incorrect clause numbers. A new clause was inserted in the bill during Committee of the Whole stage in the Legislative Council, which resulted in the renumbering of subsequent clauses. This renumbering is not reflected in the explanatory memorandum. I have authorised the explanatory memorandum for the bill to be replaced with a version containing the updated clause numbering and for the website to be updated accordingly. Members who previously obtained a copy of that document are advised to obtain the updated version from the Assembly office.

**COVID-19 RESPONSE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT
(EXTENSION OF EXPIRING PROVISIONS) BILL (NO. 2) 2021***Introduction and First Reading*

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

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

Second Reading

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Emergency Services) [2.55 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

As Australia continues to face an unprecedented emergency with COVID-19, we are back in Parliament today to extend the sunset provisions that provide the state government with the powers to manage the COVID-19 pandemic.

Earlier this year, this house recognised that these provisions continue to be integral to ensuring the safety of the community of Western Australia and provided a six-month extension to 4 January 2022. This house agreed that the COVID response provisions support our emergency management personnel, who continue to do an incredible job on the front line managing the ongoing health crisis. We moved to ensure that the state had access to the necessary powers to continue to manage the COVID-19 pandemic, which still poses a risk to the community. We are back again because it remains integral that our legislative framework can deal with this emergency, as the threat of COVID-19 continues into the immediate future.

The Delta variant is a serious threat to the community, as we have seen in the eastern states. Due to the virulent nature of this strain, Western Australia is under threat of an outbreak and we continue to require the powers to issue directions to protect Western Australia and to limit and reduce the risk of spread, if and when it arrives.

The bill before the house will extend the operative provisions of the COVID-19 response amendment acts by a further six months to 4 July 2022. I will now outline the provisions that are subject to the sunset clauses. These are the same as those considered earlier this year. I will reinforce why it is important that they are extended to ensure that the state can continue to respond appropriately to COVID-19. The Emergency Management Amendment (COVID-19 Response) Act 2020, among other things, introduced section 72A into the Emergency Management Act 2005. Section 72A provides a catch-all power that enables a hazard management officer or authorised officer to effectively manage the response to an emergency. It includes the ability to direct a person or class of persons to take any action the officer considers reasonably necessary to prevent, control or abate risks associated with the emergency. Section 72A also contains important information-gathering powers. Over the course of the pandemic, a large number of directions have been made in reliance, or partial reliance, on this section. Those directions include, but are not limited to, current versions of the Contact Register Directions, Controlled Border for Western Australia Directions, Isolation (Diagnosed) Directions, Exposure Site (Western Australia) Directions, Exposure Sites (Outside of Western Australia) Directions, Quarantine (Undiagnosed) Directions and Presentation for Testing Directions.

Pursuant to sections 2(c) and 10 of the Emergency Management Amendment (COVID-19 Response) Act 2020, as amended by the COVID-19 Response Legislation Amendment (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Act 2020 and the COVID-19 Response Legislation Amendment (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Act 2021, section 72A will be deleted from the Emergency Management Act 2005 on 4 January 2022. The intent of this sunset clause was to ensure that the section 72A powers were applied only to the circumstances of an appropriate emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic. On the sunset date, any existing directions that rely solely on section 72A will no longer be valid as there are no transitional provisions to continue the operation of those directions. Further, section 72A will not be able to be relied on for making any new directions. Ensuring that these provisions endure in the act for another six months is vital. Extension of the state of emergency will continue to be based on expert advice from the State Emergency Coordinator and the deliberations of the State Disaster Council. However, it is essential that every tool that has served our state so well to this point remains available to keep us safe in these uncertain times.

The powers under section 72A have been vital to effectively direct the isolation and testing of people arriving in Western Australia and we must have the capability to continue to make such directions. Western Australians are still returning home. Many are returning from countries that are severely impacted by the pandemic. In doing so, it is important that we effectively manage the risk. We are witnessing our own Australian states and territories grappling with community outbreaks of the Delta variant and its devastating impact. In response to these outbreaks, Western Australia has issued directions, which were supported by section 72A powers. We need to be able to respond to outbreaks in other jurisdictions and we require this power to put restrictions into place as required. It is important that, based on the current health advice and Western Australia's susceptibility to a COVID-19 outbreak, we have in place measures to manage our borders if required and to ensure that appropriate strategies are in place.

The powers under section 72A have supported our border management and the issuing of directed presentation for health testing, isolation and hotel quarantining. They have been and continue to be critical to this strategy. Section 72A powers are also essential for the government's implementation of physical distancing measures, when appropriate to the health advice. It allows for appropriate directions to be made for gatherings and activities. Western Australia currently has an easing of restrictions for social venues, such as theatres, concert halls and cinemas. Section 72A powers provide the ability to strengthen restrictions as and when required. The powers are also relied on for face-covering directions, when necessary. As we move forward and border controls are further eased, when the time is right, and in the event the state of emergency continues, section 72A will continue to be relied on. The powers will be needed to facilitate community-based events in a COVID-safe manner and for the safe movement of people in general, while having the agility to swiftly respond to any need to put in place temporary restrictions.

As outlined to this house last time, one of the key directions using section 72A information-gathering powers is the Contact Register Directions. Contact records and the continued use of the SafeWA app are integral to the state's ability to efficiently respond to and control ongoing pandemic risks. Although the subject of complacency is a concern, the SafeWA app remains the best measure for gathering contact information.

The government's decisions in responding to and managing the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to be based on the best available health advice. COVID-19 directions issued under the Emergency Management Act require the state of emergency to remain in place before the powers can be utilised. Directions relating to contact tracing and quarantine that rely on section 72A are integral in any ongoing scenario in which the state of emergency continues. Section 72A powers ensure that our emergency management personnel have the powers available to continue to help us respond to this pandemic and maintain a responsible and flexible framework that has served the state so well to this point.

I now turn to the Criminal Code Amendment (COVID-19 Response) Act 2020, which amended the Criminal Code to increase the maximum penalties for the offences of serious assault and threats committed in the context of COVID-19. The increased penalties reflect the seriousness of such assaults and threats against public officers, including frontline workers, in the context of the pandemic. Our frontline workers have been outstanding during the state of emergency. This house has already recognised that these amendments send a strong message of support to these officers for their sustained efforts in such challenging circumstances. As members may recall, the amendments were originally made in response to several concerning reports of people here, across the country and internationally claiming they have COVID-19, deliberately coughing or spitting on, or worse, public officers doing their jobs. This was happening, and is still at risk of occurring, to frontline essential staff who work tirelessly to keep our community safe and to stop the spread of this disease. The increased penalties reflect the seriousness of this unacceptable conduct and conveyed that the government and the Western Australian community do not accept such conduct. The Criminal Code Amendment (COVID-19 Response) Act 2020, as amended by the COVID-19 Response Legislation Amendment (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Act 2020 and the COVID-19 Response Legislation Amendment (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Act 2021, has a sunset date of 4 January 2022. Unless extended, the increased maximum penalties for the offences committed in the context of COVID-19 will be deleted.

As we continue to live with COVID-19 and rely so much on our frontline essential staff, it is critical that people who assault or threaten them with COVID-19 can be dealt with appropriately. The bill before us today will extend the operation of the respective sunset clauses under the COVID-19 response amendment acts for a further six months, with a new effective sunset date of 4 July 2022. It will ensure that the powers under section 72A of the Emergency Management Act 2005 will be available if the state of emergency in respect of the COVID-19 pandemic continues and will ensure that higher penalties remain available for serious assaults and threats against public officers committed in the context of COVID-19.

Members, we are still facing uncertain times. Although Western Australia has been fortunate, it is due to our strong response and ability to manage the pandemic. This bill will help us maximise certainty that we have the tools in place to do everything we can to protect our state, our people and our economy, both with the short-term response to the risk of the Delta variant and the long-term strategy as the world continues to grapple with COVID-19. Members, vaccination is a part of this and I urge everyone in this house to continue to encourage your community to roll up for WA.

It is vital that the bill be passed before Parliament rises for the year, as the sunset date for these provisions is 4 January 2022. The further extension will allow the McGowan government to respond to the challenges of the pandemic in the short term, while vaccination rates increase, and the longer term, as we navigate a way forward. Any gap in these laws in response to the COVID-19 pandemic will potentially present an unacceptable risk to the health, safety and financial security of Western Australians.

I commend the bill to the house.

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

VETERINARY PRACTICE BILL 2021

Second Reading

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Tourism) [3.09 pm] — in reply: Before being rudely interrupted by question time, I was giving a very good example, I thought, of the issues associated with the term "veterinary medicine"! I was highlighting that the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development is currently consulting with industry and the community with respect to pregnancy testing and the spaying of cattle. Depending upon the outcome of those consultations, these practices may be taken out of, or included in, the definition of "veterinary medicine" so long as they are undertaken by certain persons in specified circumstances to address animal welfare considerations. This may result in large corporate farming businesses employing personnel who are experienced in pregnancy testing rather than requiring veterinary services to perform this function. The manner in which each regulation is framed can address all circumstances clearly to ensure a practical economic outcome that is cognisant of animal welfare.

Member for Roe, it is important that the regulations made pursuant to this power will take the usual course of being subject to community and industry consultation, and ultimately require ministerial support. Of course they will be tabled in Parliament. As the member knows, a motion of disallowance is allowed through that process. I assure the member, as I did before question time, that it is the Minister for Agriculture and Food's intention to consult on the drafting and ultimate affirmation of the proposed regulations subject to this bill.

The member also mentioned issues around the routine inspection of veterinary premises. I want to make a few comments about that. A section in the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1960 states —

The Registrar may, at any time, require an applicant or the holder of a certificate of registration under this section —

...

(b) to permit the premises to be inspected on behalf of the Board ...

Since 2010, routine inspections of all registered veterinary premises have been carried out at five-yearly intervals for the following reasons. Firstly, to ensure that veterinary premises comply with the minimum standards for such premises, and secondly, to educate a profession as to the required professional standards of conduct for veterinary surgeons and nurses, veterinary students and authorised persons. That process of inspection also allows questions or answers to queries, and provides information on support. As the member highlighted, a number of practices are indeed isolated from other veterinary colleagues. Those routine inspections are an important opportunity to engage with some veterinary practices that might be quite isolated in terms of the geographic location. Issues commonly found on inspection range from poor maintenance of premises, health and safety issues regarding humans, and potentially the inadequate disposal of hazardous waste. Those sorts of matters may be brought to attention during an inspection. Appropriate clinical record keeping and drug record keeping are also important considerations.

Other states and territories have regular routine inspections. I am advised that regular routine inspections are conducted every four years in New South Wales, the ACT and Tasmania. Queensland only requires an inspection on registration. The Northern Territory, South Australia and Victoria do not undertake regular inspections, but given this bill will modernise an existing act that has had a life of 60 years, it is an appropriate matter for inclusion in the Western Australian bill.

The member also highlighted other matters, which I will briefly touch on, because I know we will go into consideration in detail and potentially conclude this bill before four o'clock. But it is up to the member; I am either way if this falls over into tomorrow.

Registration fees are currently paid annually for veterinarians, but every three years for veterinary premises. The bill proposes to change all fees to be paid annually and registration fees will be reviewed on a regular basis. The fees vary for vets, between \$450 to \$500; for vet nurses, slightly less; and for a vet premises, the current registration payable is a yearly fee of \$1 500. The fees are prescribed under regulations and indexed annually to increase with the consumer price index.

The bill will allow capacity for complaints and issues associated with assessments. It will allow an assessment to be made. When it is not necessary for something to go to the State Administrative Tribunal, which of course can be quite a prolonged process—as the member said in his contribution—we want the board to work through complaints and assessments in a practical and timely way. The intention is for the board to act efficiently and with expediency to deal with complaints.

In terms of how a health assessment is dealt with in the bill: part 10 of the bill provides powers for the board to order a person to undergo a health assessment. The board will place this requirement on a person when it reasonably believes that the person has an impairment. By definition, "impairment" means that the impairment exists and is likely to, or does, detriment the person's capacity to practice veterinary medicine. The process under the bill ensures that the board provides procedural fairness to a person—which is obviously very important—concerning the decision and that they are given notice and reasons in writing for the requirement. The board must have regard to any submissions made to it by the person who is required to undergo the health assessment. The board appoints the medical practitioner and pays for the health assessment, although a person may nominate their treating doctor to perform the assessment and provide a report. That is my understanding. The person is given a copy of the report, when completed, and the board makes its decision about any action based on the expert health report.

The member for Roe mentioned compassion. Obviously, it needs to be a compassionate process. It is concerning. For a range of reasons, including fatigue and the fact that the profession deals with people's emotions, particularly those who are highly emotional about their pets' welfare et cetera, I think the term is "compassionate fatigue", a person's mental health is challenged. It is sad. When I was speaking to the advisers in preparation for this bill, in the profession, sadly, there is still a higher-than-average number of practitioners who self-harm, which I think is very concerning. I think the processes in this bill will allow for genuine assessments to be made in the best interests of the practice of the person involved and the services they provide. It will be an important guiding principle of the board's considerations.

I want to thank the member for Roe for the opposition's support of the bill. In his contribution he was very supportive of the impairment elements of the bill, which is much appreciated, and he acknowledged that the time frame for the gestation of this bill has been long. I assure him that the consultation on the bill has been thorough. I think it has been guided by a number of key influences, including the personnel I highlighted earlier on in my contribution in the second reading debate. I think we need to acknowledge the efforts of those experts and people, because essentially we want to get this right. This is the first time in 60 years that we have had an opportunity to genuinely form a bill. We know that veterinary practice touches the lives of many Australians, as the member and I both agreed earlier, so it is appropriate that we amend this bill, that we modernise it, that we make sure there are new considerations in the modern context and that we end up with a system that protects those honourable people practising in the profession of veterinary medicine. We must protect the interest of the staff that work with them as well and respect the fact that they do really important work in communities throughout Western Australia. They do an overwhelmingly good job, but we want legislation that is modern, supportive, practical and effective that enables them to continue to do their important job and fulfil the role they play in Western Australian society. I thank the member for Roe for his contribution. We will go to consideration in detail and go into a little more detail and clarify some issues the member may have, and then I look forward to this bill passing this place and progressing into law.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave denied to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.

Clause 3: Terms used —

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: As I said previously to the minister, I am looking for clarity about regulations. I thought I would maybe start by looking at the definition of “veterinary practice business”, because this defines the business and who may supply goods and services. I know the minister spoke about this in his second reading reply, but I would like some assurance about the practice and the issue I brought up in my second reading contribution of the minister's, almost, contradiction of her own words between what she said to *Farm Weekly* and her contribution in *Hansard* about how long a veterinary surgeon, or a veterinarian—as it is now being put into our other acts—have to be in the practice. There is nowhere in the bill that I can deal with this question, so I thought we might start on that footing, if we can.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I thank the member for the question. There are a couple of things I can say. First of all, I will give assurances. Any regulations related to this aspect will be subject to further consultation. The minister has already given that very clear commitment in the other place during debate, including addressing assurances sought by Hon Dr Steve Thomas. I can assure the member on that. As the member would be aware, the drafting of regulations is an important part of the process. Those regulations will be done in consultation with, of course, not only Hon Dr Steve Thomas, who the minister has indicated she will consult with, but also the experts who will inform that finalisation of drafting.

Turning to parliamentary processes, any regulation is subject to be tabled in this place and to disallowance. I assure the member that given the length of time it has taken for this legislation to be developed, drafted and consulted on, we will get it right. The minister wants to get it right. It will be informed by the eminent people advising us on it. I see very clearly why the numbers of hours a veterinarian would need to be onsite would not be defined. That would probably be breached every single day, because a registered veterinarian cannot predict when a priority call would require them to be on other premises. Essentially, there is an inbuilt capacity to continue to be flexible. I said this in my second reading speech, and as the minister highlighted, someone who is called to an emergency on the member for Roe's farm or someone else's farm or at another premises in town or outside town will not be breached for that. That element of flexibility is required. I suppose the wording is “substantial attendance”. I think that term allows flexibility, but it is not prescribed. I think we want to avoid prescribing. I certainly would not want to say it needs to be a certain number of hours or whatever. The general thrust is that we would expect the veterinarian to be present at the premises for a substantial period, subject to any priorities or indeed emergencies. Although I understand the member's concern and in some debates or reports, there may have been, to the member, some ambiguity, I assure the member that the ultimate regulations and practices will be delivered to the intent of this legislation are along those lines that I have described.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Exactly as the minister said in his response—he spoke about disallowances and so forth. That is all great, but, as we know, with the numbers, if there is a disallowance motion, it will not come to any fruition if the government decides it is not going to take any notice of it. I guess what I am really asking for—which the minister has given me in some ways—is that assurance that the opposition will be involved and consulted in the drafting of those regulations, because Hon Dr Steve Thomas has that experience. He has 17 years at the coalface.

The minister said that the veterinarian will have a notice on the front of the building to say that the practice will be open from this time to that time and a veterinarian will be in the practice from eight o'clock to five, but if they get called out, that is the not the case. It is just that reassurance. As I said this morning, the vet I spoke to was worried about that side of it. If they get called out, what is the reassurance that someone is not going to come in and shut them down because they are not in the practice when they turn up?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: As I said, I think the minister in the other place has given that assurance. Do not forget that the matter will ultimately be subject to further consultation with industry as we draft those regulations. The bill contemplates capacity for non-veterinarian ownership of a practice. Those matters need to be considered. I would not envisage that the minister would bring forward regulations that are not supported in the spirit of the industry. They have been waiting a long time for this. I have had vets approach me, including Dr Punch, whom I did not mention in my previous comments. I can remember years ago, as I was walking along the Old Mandurah Traffic Bridge, he said, "I'm Dr Punch. I'm a veterinarian and I run a veterinarian practice here, and I need to highlight the importance of reform." He is obviously one of a number of eminent veterinarians who have been very interested in the reform of the existing legislation. I am sure those people will continue to influence the development of the regulations.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Will the consultation also extend to the new board of eight people in relation to this?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Yes. I am advised that the formation of the new board is in train with elections et cetera. The new board will be in a position to influence through consultation outcomes regarding the drafting of regulations.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: How does the minister see the enforcement of the regulation that will relate to a vet being on the premises most of the time—or whatever the regulation ends up saying—proceeding? Who will be the enforcement body? Will there be an enforcement body? How would it play out if that body turned up and the vet was out delivering a calf in the paddock?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Ultimately, the board would determine any noncompliance, if you like. However, I need to highlight I am advised that even under the current arrangements there is no such record of a breach, essentially, under regulation 33.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4 and 5 put and passed.

Clause 6: Application for renewal of registration —

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: We have details about how it should be made not later than one month after the day on which registration expires. Can the Leader of the House enlighten me what would happen if the application was not made within one month of expiry?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Yes, I can. A person who is registered may apply for the renewal of registration. An application can be made after a registration expires, but only if it is not later than one month after the registration expires. The registration must be accompanied by the prescribed application and registration fees and an application made after expiry will attract an additional fee if prescribed in the regulations, but it cannot be more than 50 per cent of the application fee. Essentially, in answer to the member's question, if it does expire, a further one month's grace, if you like, will be available for a successful re-registration.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Can the minister give me a rough idea of what the actual application fees are, just some sort of ballpark figures?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Member, first of all, obviously, a review of the fees will take place for future fees. However, it is not expected they will be substantially different from the existing fee structure. I have a list of fees. Some of these fees are current initial applications, so at the initial application stage. Others are annual, current annual fees, but I will give the member an example. For the general registration category, the initial application fee is \$142 and the current annual fee is \$465, with a total of \$607. For a specialist, the initial application fee is \$210 and the current annual fee is \$91, with a total of \$301. For a vet nurse, the initial application fee is \$46 and the current annual fee is \$74, with a total of \$121. Obviously, the renewal fee—because the initial application fee is a one-off—remains at \$74. For a trainee vet nurse, there is no initial application fee, but the current annual fee is \$28. For a new graduate, the initial application fee is \$142 and the current annual fee is \$142, with a total of \$284. For an authorised person, which I think the member highlighted in his comments, the initial application fee is \$400 and the current annual fee is \$200, with a total of \$600. For an authorised person who is a not-for-profit, the initial application fee is \$120 and the current annual fee is \$120, with a total of \$240. For the registration of veterinary premises, the initial application fee is \$530 and the current annual fee is \$420, with a total of \$950.

As we said, obviously the fees will be subject to consideration and review as part of the processes. However, we do not expect them to be subject to huge change. I am advised that the new structure in the bill requires the payment of the prescribed application and registration fees. That is what is required.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 7 put and passed.

Clause 8: Refusal of application —

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Under clause 8, “Refusal of application”, the board may refuse a part 2 application if it has not been made in accordance with requirements et cetera. Can the minister tell me what the recourse is if someone feels that they are qualified and have put in a good application? What is their recourse?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Yes, there is a recourse option. If a decision to refuse an application is made, it is reviewable. Under clause 150(1) and (2)(a), decisions by the board to refuse a part 2 application or part 3 application are reviewable decisions. The review of these decisions will be dealt with in a hearing by the State Administrative Tribunal.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 9 to 13 put and passed.

Clause 14: Registration as veterinary nurse —

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Obviously, this clause deals with registration as a veterinary nurse. As we spoke about in our contributions, this is a new one for Western Australia. It is not currently applicable in many other states, as I understand it, but the vet I spoke to this morning is in favour of it. Does the minister sense that some of these requirements for registration may be a bit too onerous for someone going from a place with no or little registration requirements to somewhere that requires full registration? Obviously, we understand the requirement to be sufficiently proficient in English and that type of thing, but does the minister believe that any of the other elements are a bit too onerous in comparison with those in other states?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: As the member highlighted, the veterinary practitioner he spoke to this morning sees the value and importance of making sure that veterinary nurses are appropriately registered. I think that in any profession, acknowledgement of appropriate expertise or qualities through a registration process is important. This will enhance the status of the veterinary practice itself and also ultimately instil confidence in the customers of the services provided by the practice. The ability to say that a certain number of registered veterinary nurses are employed in a practice will give some assurance to the consumers of the services of that practice and also enhance the status of the profession. Ultimately, we want well-trained, compassionate, cognisant people working in the industry.

As I say, it is certainly one of those industries that is attractive to people. In my experience, a lot of young people and people who have a love of animals and want to protect animals are attracted to the profession. Indeed, many young men and women in my area have had aspirations to train either as veterinary practitioners, surgeons or specialists or as veterinary nurses. I think lots of them would start as veterinary nurses. A number of people would train as veterinary nurses and be registered under this proposal and many of them would have aspirations to do further study and ultimately become vets in their own right. That is probably very true of the profession itself.

I do not think it is onerous. I think it is reflective of the modern expectations of an important industry. I do not think it will impact on demand or, indeed, aspiration to take up what I think is a very noble occupation.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 15 to 21 put and passed.

Clause 22: Recognition of veterinarians registered in other jurisdictions —

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: This clause is to recognise veterinarians registered in other jurisdictions. I spoke in favour of this clause in my contribution to the second reading debate. Firstly, is there any exception to the other states? Is it blanket cover for people who are registered in the Northern Territory, Tasmania, South Australia or on the eastern seaboard? Are there any exceptions to that or are we accepting veterinarians from every other state?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The proposed new scheme in this bill is essentially for interstate and Territorian veterinary surgeons who seek to practise in Western Australia. Part 2, division 4 provides for the WA legislation to recognise registration of veterinarians and specialty veterinarians however they are described who have been registered with the equivalent regulatory authority and permitted to practise veterinary medicine in a corresponding jurisdiction. Western Australia is in fact the last Australian jurisdiction to adopt mutual recognition of veterinarians in this way. It is long overdue, I would have thought. In fact, from memory, that is one of the issues that Dr Punch accosted me about early one morning on the Old Mandurah Traffic Bridge. It will position us in alignment, if you like, with other jurisdictions—other states and territories—and I think that is sensible.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: It seems like the minister transacts a lot of business on the Old Mandurah Traffic Bridge!

Dr D.J. Honey: I think we know where to find him now.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: That is right.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Since that interaction, the old bridge has been demolished.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Next time I go to Mandurah, I might walk on the new bridge and hopefully I might find the minister. I have a further question about a person’s principal place of residence. Can the minister clarify subclause (3)(a), which refers to “a period not exceeding 3 months”? I assume that the applicant will need to have a current registration in another state. I imagine it goes without saying that a person cannot come across from another state without a current registration.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The current procedure under the Veterinary Surgeons Act for members who wish to work in WA is to seek approval from the board to do so. They do that by giving notice to the board and by applying for registration generally. The regulation provides for the relevant fees. Under this legislation, interstate practitioners will be able to apply for registration in WA and must do so if they reside in WA and wish to work in WA for more than three months. That is essentially the principle under which the registration of people from other states and territories will be considered by the board if their principal place of residence becomes WA.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: What will happen if someone has been previously suspended, disciplined or whatever in another state? How will the current board deal with that?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am advised that a person from another state or territory will apply under the proposed provisions to the board for consideration for registration. They will need to have evidence of good standing, which, of course, will be a key consideration by the board in its assessment of their registration application.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 23 to 55 put and passed.

Clause 56: Carrying out acts of veterinary medicine —

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Clause 56, under part 5, “Offences”, states —

- (1) A person must not carry out an act of veterinary medicine unless the person is—
 - (a) a veterinarian; or
 - (b) a veterinary nurse; or
 - (c) an authorised person.

What will happen in an emergency if for some reason the veterinarian is not available for 15 minutes or half an hour, or they cannot get out to the paddock in time, and someone less qualified takes it upon themselves to do something?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I direct the member to clause 56(4), which states —

It is a defence to a charge of an offence under subsection (1), (2) or (3) to prove that the act was carried out by the accused in an emergency situation for the purpose of administering first aid to save the life of an animal or relieve pain suffered by an animal.

There is essentially a defence clause considered in this bill.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: That is good to hear. In relation to the fairly substantial fines—\$10 000 for a first offence and \$20 000 for subsequent offences—how will that play out in the real world? What will happen and who will administer and enforce the fine? Will it be the board or the police? How will it work?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: In the real world, if a matter is progressed, it will be by a person authorised by the board and the proceedings will be conducted as summary proceedings in the Magistrates Court of Western Australia.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Is there any right of appeal on that particular provision if someone has been caught off guard?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Once it is in the court, it is subject to the court’s processes and determinations. It would be subject to processes associated with the Magistrates Court.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 57 to 80 put and passed.

Clause 81: Making complaint —

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: This clause is in relation to making complaints that a person has engaged in unprofessional conduct or professional misconduct. Who can make a complaint, and how qualified do they have to be to make a complaint?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Any person can make a complaint to the board.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Is the minister referring to subclause (2)?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Under division 3, “Complaints”, and clause 81, “Making complaint”, complaints may be made by any person to the board and indeed the board may also self-initiate a complaint.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Can any person make any complaint? Do they not have to have any skills, past history or whatever? Can they be potentially involved in the incident, but also be operating under hearsay or whatever, so they do not have to have any particular connection to the incident?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: As long as the complaint is in writing, it will be assessed by the board under clause 85. Matters relating to a complaint are ultimately potentially subjective, so the board will have processes in place to assess such a complaint. I am sure if it is a vexatious complaint or lacks credibility, it will be dealt with appropriately.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION*Motion*

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe — Leader of the Liberal Party) [4.02 pm]: I move —

That this house condemns the Labor government for allowing our state to miss opportunities for economic diversification and growth in critical sectors, impacting our long-term future.

It is quite clear that both WA Labor and the Treasurer are lost when it comes to economic growth and diversification of our state economy. It is also quite clear that the government has no clear economic plan or vision for Western Australia for the next 20 years. It is a government that is happy to hide behind the shadow of COVID-19 and continue to reap public support from it; however, it is not doing the hard work that a government with its majority, heading into five years of being in office, should be doing to set up Western Australia for the future. That is no more evident than in the absolute dearth of skilled labour available to businesses in the Western Australian economy. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia recently published some figures, and its modelling indicates that Western Australia is over 50 000 workers short across every sector, including tourism, hospitality, manufacturing, agriculture, mining—the list goes on. Yesterday, during question time, I put a question about this to the Premier; Treasurer. We got back a glib response that everything is fine, everything is right, we have low unemployment in this state and the state economy is doing extremely well; therefore, there is no problem in this state at all. But, as the Minister for Health would know, our health system and our hospitals utterly depend and have always depended on a steady stream of doctors, nurses and other health professionals coming into this state. During the first COVID outbreak I had the opportunity to talk to a number of people, particularly in the medical field; I had some very senior medical people come to see me. They said, “David, the casualty of this is going to be our hospital system.” Our hospital system utterly depends on experienced medical staff coming in from overseas. We have heard that the government made some late efforts to try to get some doctors in, but not nearly enough.

We see this crisis right across the state, and no more so than in the north west of the state. I am sure my colleagues will cover this in more detail, but I went to Kununurra and spoke to the hospitality industry there. It has a complete lack of workers. The main tavern in Kununurra, which is the main social centre for people, has to substantially restrict its hours because it simply cannot get workers for that area. People on holidays cannot get a meal there because the establishment has to restrict its hours or there are days when it does not open because it does not have the workers. It is more important than that; it is about the future of those industries. It is about all the skilled workers who we need. We talk about the revolution in green jobs—potentially, as I will explain in some detail. That is something that this state is failing to take advantage of. It requires people with skills, who we currently do not have in this state. Over time—over five, 10 or 15 years—we can build up that skills base, but we need to have those skilled workers in this state now.

Rio Tinto has announced that its iron ore exports will reduce by as much as 20 million tonnes in significant part because it cannot get the skilled workers it requires for that industry. Members can do the arithmetic on that, but if they multiply that 20 million tonnes by \$100 a tonne, taking a moderate estimate for iron ore prices, it is \$2 billion, and 7.5 per cent of that is a state royalty, so that is tens of millions of dollars of lost revenue for this state that could be helping to solve some of the key problems we have in Western Australia. That will have a material impact on our economic activity. This is important, because those high iron ore prices will not last forever. They are temporary. All forecasters recognise it.

The member for Willagee gave a great speech at the start of this Parliament in March this year about the existential threat to iron ore prices. Getting the advantage of those high iron ore prices now is critically important, but industry is being held back by labour shortages. The response we got yesterday, as I said, from the Premier; Treasurer was, “What’s the problem? There’s no problem, because we’ve got low unemployment now, because the economy is buoyant.” We know why we have low unemployment, and that is because we have a resources industry that is at historic highs. It has nothing to do with this state government. It is a quirk of the global economy and the expansion in China.

One substantial reason for Western Australia’s low unemployment rate is that the government has stopped those skilled workers coming into the state. The government might say it is a good thing, but it is holding back critical industries. I was talking to a drilling contractor in Kalgoorlie a couple of months ago. A labour shortage is the only thing stopping that contractor from expanding his business, which is critically important for the future, with mines now being held back. That exploratory drilling work is critically important for the future, but it is being held back because contractors simply cannot get labour in Kalgoorlie. This contractor cannot get labour to meet the customer needs of his business. That will impact us in the future.

This highlights a lack of experience on the part of the Premier and Treasurer in this place to think that this fundamental labour constraint is not a problem for the economy of Western Australia now and into the future. As I said, we all know what has caused the budget surplus at the moment, and what causes the low unemployment levels. I welcome low unemployment levels, but I do not welcome the negative impact that this is having on our economy now, and particularly into the future. The Treasurer’s job is not just about economic prosperity now; it is about economic

prosperity in 10 or 20 years. This government has a really unique opportunity to use its numbers in this place. It has ascendant numbers in this Parliament and has complete control of both houses. It can sit back, work out a cogent economic plan for this state and implement it. Not that members on this side would stop something as positive as that, but the government has the absolute opportunity to do that. We have a lot of backbenchers sitting in this chamber, and I suspect in the upper house as well, who have plenty of time on their hands. We have some new members in this place who are pretty sharp cookies from what I can see—not all of them, but I will not name them so as not to embarrass anyone.

Ms S.E. Winton: The good ones or the bad ones?

Dr D.J. HONEY: The good ones are sitting in the chamber at the moment.

Mr R.H. Cook interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: They are the people who care, minister. The government can do that because it has a unique opportunity. Governments do not get many opportunities like this; in fact, it is a unique opportunity. I am sure that the minister opposite, the member for Armadale, who is a student of politics, could tell me the last time a government had absolute control in both houses. I think it was back in Sir Charles Court's era.

Dr A.D. Buti: What do you mean “absolute control”?

Dr D.J. HONEY: As in control of both houses of Parliament.

Dr A.D. Buti: You always do!

Dr D.J. HONEY: No; it is less common than the minister thinks, but I stand corrected. I will bow to the minister's political wisdom on this, as in some other matters.

It is a real threat to us. Our agricultural sector is struggling for workers. The good season we have had this year is unlikely to occur again. It is probably the best agricultural season I have seen in my lifetime. It could well be that we have years of extremely dry conditions following this, and those farmers will not have the opportunity to maximise the economic benefit from this year. If they cannot get their crops off and into the bins, and CBH cannot get the grain to port in time to take advantage of those premium prices at this time of the year and over the Christmas period, growers will not get the advantage of that. That will stop them from putting money away for those bad seasons that will inevitably come in the future. It is not as easy as saying, “We're missing out this year” or “Maybe we'll miss out this year”; it will have an impact in the future.

I find the ad hoc nature of the way that people are allowed into this state and the way that workers are brought into this state to be really concerning, dumbfounding and, in many cases cruel can I say. We heard from the Treasurer that some agricultural workers were allowed into the state. Why were not more agricultural workers allowed into the state? What was the criteria? How was the number of workers we bring into the state decided? The truth is that many tens of thousands of workers have been brought into WA. The Minister for Health will know—I do not know—the better part of 20 000 overseas migrants have come to Western Australia in the COVID period. I assume that workers who have travelled interstate must be at the 100 000 level, or something like that. Tens and tens of thousands of people have come to Western Australia from overseas and interstate, but for some reason we have not been able to bring in sufficient workers in these key areas. I raise that example because the government knows how to safely bring people into the state. The government boasts all the time that it is keeping Western Australians safe and we have not had COVID outbreaks. The government knows how to do this. After the COVID pandemic started, it was obvious that bringing labour into the state was a major concern, and we encouraged the government at that time to provide a purpose-built facility for that. What happened? The government held its breath and played this finger-pointing game with the federal government—it is their fault; it is not our job, and so on. Meanwhile, who suffers? It is Western Australia. The government can point fingers all it likes and it can score a point against its political opposite in the federal government, but it does not help the state of Western Australia.

Even more confusing for many people is that when it came to sport, football teams were crisscrossing the country with their significant entourages. It was not just the football players; I suspect there are twice as many people supporting those teams than actual players. The other issue that many people found confronting was that certain entertainers and high profile business people could travel around at will. I will not name them in this place, but I met a number of people in my electorate who, in the height of the COVID period, said they would not shake my hand because they had just got back from overseas or Melbourne or wherever. This was when a daughter could not visit her dying mother in another state, yet it seemed that some people had complete immunity to travel restrictions. The fact is that people could travel. Why could it not be done in those critical areas? This is holding back the state not just for now but for the future.

Another area of concern, which I asked a question about today and which has the potential to cause enormous harm to all of us in this state, is the failure of this government in relation to the Aboriginal heritage legislation. I know that this is not trivial, and it is not a simple matter, but as I pointed out today during question time by way of a supplementary question, this government abolished the department of Aboriginal heritage. I heard the Premier say that that was a good thing and it was supported. I have spoken to a large number of Aboriginal people who are

very concerned about it. This argument that it comes into the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and, therefore, it is all right and it actually gives it status does not hold water. Those communities have seen a lack of appropriate focus. A review started three years ago, in March 2018, and progress has been glacial. I know this is not trivial. It is a matter that is so important to the state of Western Australia that that is where the government should put in extra resources and extra effort. We have heard from a number of Aboriginal leaders in Western Australia that they have not heard from the government or they have heard very late from the government in relation to this bill. Equally, I understand the point that the Premier made that there will not be a solution that will have every single person saying this is a wonderful outcome and that everyone will be perfectly satisfied. There will be some compromise in that bill. However, a consequence of the time it has taken is that there is a very real risk, and we are verging on the likelihood, that the federal government will step in. Everyone in this place who cares about timely approvals and appropriate consideration of Aboriginal heritage will know that it is best managed in this state. I do not care whether it is a Liberal government or a Labor government; I have faith that a Labor government would manage this appropriately and well when it is in power, as I would when we are in power. I do not have the same faith that we would get the right outcomes for Western Australia if Canberra, at its great distance, is managing this issue. There was a report that came out of the current parliamentary inquiry into the Juukan Gorge incident—Premier, thank you! The report says —

In light of the criticisms of the operation of the current and proposed Western Australian legislation, the Committee considers that the Commonwealth Government has a role in legislating for minimum cultural heritage protection standards.

It makes this finding —

The Australian Parliament should legislate for an overarching Commonwealth legislative framework based on the protection of cultural heritage rather than its destruction, in line with the principles set out below. State and territory legislation should also be required to meet the principles set out in this report.

As I have said, I think there is unanimity in this house that Aboriginal heritage should be appropriately protected, but the question is how best to do it. I am sure the minister has had to intersect with federal legislation at different times. I resonate with the point that the Premier made today: the states are different. They have different imperatives and different needs. In applying the view of metropolitan-centric Melbourne and Sydney to complex issues of cultural heritage and sustaining our mining industry in Western Australia, those two things would not mix well. As I said today, we on this side are absolutely committed. We will work with the government in any way to get this through, but we need to see it and it would be good if we saw it soon. We are not going to sit here and politically pointscore off this, other than to say, “Get it done.” We will say that. We will criticise the government for not getting it done, but we are not going to try to pick holes in this. We will try to work as cooperatively with the government as we possibly can to get the best outcome for the state, and we definitely want to do everything in our power to make sure that we keep this legislation and this control within the state of Western Australia and not have it controlled from Melbourne and Sydney in the metropolitan-centric eastern states.

To finish on that point, if it did happen, that would have a very direct, substantial negative impact on our state economy. I have spoken to the large miners and they tell me that from identifying a suitable ore body to actually having that ore body in production takes up to six or seven years, maybe even longer. If federal legislation interceded on this, that would very likely blow that out by three or four years more. For the big players, that may be okay and maybe they could get through that. But for our mid-tier and junior players, that would be unsustainable because they could not carry the capital debt for that many years before they got into production. That will ultimately impact on our economy if it comes to pass.

We have come to see what appears to be the government’s idiosyncratic, ad hoc decision-making in relation to COVID, but we also see that in a number of areas. We see major changes being implemented without any appropriate consultation, with industry being completely blindsided by the government’s decisions. It appears that someone gets a rush of blood and they make a decision. Then they come in and just blindside a particular industry. We saw that with the tax on the gold industry and all the efforts around that. We saw that with the ham-fisted effort of the current Minister for Water, the then Minister for Fisheries, in trying to bludgeon the crayfish industry into submission on some socialist agenda that he had in his own mind. We saw that in relation to the oil and gas industry. We in this place have never heard the rationale for shutting down the onshore oil and gas industry and preventing exports. Even more so, we have never heard how a couple of winners are picked out of the onshore manufacturers in the oil and gas industry.

We are certainly seeing a massive revolution in the energy industry. If natural gas were to be our only pre-eminent cleaner energy source for the next hundred years, I could understand the logic of it and the government could articulate that and so on. The world is going through an energy revolution—members know that. The federal Liberal government is now, obviously, very much onto the net zero emissions by 2050. It will soon, I think, be the coalition government keen on that! Members can see that that is a massive cultural change. As members here would know, I am a fan of this.

Mr R.H. Cook: Will they get there?

Dr D.J. HONEY: They will get there.

As I have said, this is not a political argument anymore. This is a social movement as much as it is anything. There is a profound cultural change around the world and the community is saying that it is not very interested in subtle arguments about whether members of Parliament think it is economical; it is what we as a community demand. There are many things like that in the community for which it is a profound social change. Therefore, we are going to move to decarbonise our economy. As members know, what that means is at the moment there is an enormous demand for natural gas around the world. If we do not develop those onshore deposits and allow exports—a number of years ago, I would have had a very different view from this, but, clearly, the situation has changed very dramatically—we will never bring that wealth and development into those communities. But, as I say, it is haphazard; we see a couple of winners and lots of losers in that. The Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association, or APPEA, was completely blindsided by that decision. There was no consultation at all. The Premier just came out and said, “This is what we’re doing.” We then had the arbitrary decision about an exemption for Waitsia and, recently, Black Mountain has been allowed one. Why? What is the rationale for that? How does the government go to the other onshore gas producers and say, “This is why you have been singled out to not be able to do it, but these other companies are allowed to do it.” I want to make it very clear that I am not criticising those companies. I am glad that they have been able to get out there and prosecute the argument for their businesses. My issue does not sit with those organisations; it sits with the government with this idiosyncratic form of decision-making, which blindsides other organisations.

When we look at forestry—again, my colleagues will talk about this more fully in a moment—we see an attack by this Labor government on the forestry industry. Frankly, I do not think that I have heard more nonsense said about a decision in my life than in the justification for that. There are a couple of nonsensical parts. The first is: if you go to plant some pine trees, that means that you are not destroying thousands of jobs. When do members opposite reckon people can put a pine tree through a mill? The government has come out as saying there will be no hardwood logging after 2024. That is the government’s decision. It will cut out all the hardwood. Therefore, how big will those pine trees be in 2024? Will they be about as tall as me or maybe a bit taller? I tell members opposite this: they will not be going through a mill and being cut into beams for housing or construction.

Mr R.S. Love: I do not think they’ll be as tall as you, because they’ve got no land!

Dr D.J. HONEY: Excellent point!

Mr R.S. Love: And then you plant it, so —

Dr D.J. HONEY: Excellent point, Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr R.S. Love: I think they’ll be in a box somewhere.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I think they will be in someone’s dream file, will they not, because there is no land to plant the coupe, but let us assume the best. Let us assume that the government magically finds some land. Perhaps the rehabilitation of the coalmine pits of Collie could do; there is a suggestion that members opposite could consider. Maybe the government will find the land, but there is no way that timber will be able to be milled from those plantations for 10 to 20 years—even if laminated beams were made. It beggars belief that the government could say that that will be the thing that stops the loss of jobs. It is just utterly nonsensical.

The other one was that somehow or other this will deal with the greenhouse gas issue. What a load of rubbish. I think it has escaped the attention of members on the other side that when trees are cut down, they grow again. It is the most sustainable industry in the state. It is carried out by enormously professional people. The department of forestry is an outstanding scientifically based organisation. It is a sustainable industry. It is sustainable for thousands of years, completely greenhouse gas neutral in relation to the cycling of the timber that is cut down and then regrows, and it is put here as a greenhouse gas-saving issue! I am fascinated that the Minister for Environment said that she is concerned about greenhouse gas emissions. It might be of interest to at least the members who are here: what do they think has happened to greenhouse gas emissions from Western Australia since this government came to power?

Mr P.J. Rundle: I’m not too sure.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I am glad the member for Roe is interested. Talk about a big fail for government: greenhouse gas emissions in Western Australia, from the most recently available data, which is 2017 to 2019—under the term of this government—has increased from 81.3 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions to 91.9 tonnes of CO₂ emissions per annum. The minister says she is making the hard decisions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in some imagined way because she will stop the sustainable hardwood forestry industry, but in fact what we have seen is an increase under this government of 10 million tonnes per annum of CO₂ emissions. The Minister for Environment has completely failed her job. She comes in here with a virtue-signalling and destructive policy to say that she is doing something about the environment. She has done nothing. Quite the opposite. The minister has done worse than nothing: greenhouse gas emissions have gone up dramatically under this government. There has been an almost 13 per cent increase in greenhouse gas emissions under this government in the state of Western Australia. The minister came out with some headline-grabbing story, destroying thousands of jobs in the state. That is not leadership by the government.

In my last few minutes, I will finish off by talking about green hydrogen. We have not had a chance to discuss this. Western Australia is now the last Australian state to develop a green hydrogen industry. I encourage every member in this place to listen to the presentation made by Andrew Forrest to the National Press Club of Australia. Hear what he had to say about this government and this Premier in relation to this matter. This government has completely failed. It has completely missed the boat. A pre-eminent Western Australian, a highly regarded businessperson who is passionate and devoted to Western Australia in Dr Andrew Forrest and his company Fortescue Metals Group's Fortescue Future Industries, had to go to Tasmania, Queensland and New South Wales to establish those facilities. Think about how profound that is. I will focus on it again: Andrew Forrest is going to build a facility in Gladstone, Queensland, that will manufacture electrolyzers. It may not mean much to government members, but that is how hydrogen is made—from water. Electricity is passed through an electrolyser to split the water into oxygen and hydrogen. The factory being built in Queensland will double the global supply of electrolyzers. It will be the most significant manufacturing facility in the world for building electrolyzers. This is leading edge, high-tech manufacturing, and Western Australia missed out because this Premier; Treasurer, and the Minister for Lands, and whoever else should have been involved, could not deliver 40 hectares of suitable industrial land for that facility. Imagine that!

Mr V.A. Catania: Unbelievable.

Dr D.J. HONEY: It is unbelievable—starting at a \$1 billion investment.

The New South Wales government has shown the way by investing \$3 billion. What does this government do? Where is the capital investment from this government? We heard from the Minister for Transport today in question time—in the way that she boasts, and cajoles and derides this side of the house. She has overseen the single-largest capital cost blowout in a government capital project in the history of this state—that is, the Metronet project. The scope of that project has barely changed, some minor tinkering has been done, yet it has gone from \$2.945 billion to \$7.4 billion in the last budget.

Mr P.J. Rundle: And rising.

Dr D.J. HONEY: And rising. As I have said many times in this place, what the member for North West Central said about the project costing \$10 billion will be 100 per cent correct—depressingly! Imagine what that \$4 billion cost overrun could have done at Oakajee. If that money had been invested there and if that industrial estate was established, Andrew Forrest would have built his facility there. If appropriate land had been available in the Kwinana–Rockingham industrial area, he would have built that facility there. That is true for all the investors in that area.

I want to give my colleagues a proper opportunity to make their contributions. However, this is where we are at the moment in relation to green hydrogen in this state. We are where the iron ore industry was in the 1960s and the natural gas industry was in the 1970s and 1980s. You are either on that train at the start or you miss it. At this stage, Western Australia is missing it. I know for a fact because I have spoken to a large number of people who are looking at investing in this state and they all say the same thing—the absence of critical enabling infrastructure, the purpose-built industrial estates and the connection into the south west interconnected system means that they will not be able to initiate their projects in this state. Some things will happen in Western Australia; there will be little things. The government has put a couple of hundred million dollars aside and whatever, so some people will take advantage of that. The heavy hitters, the mainstream projects and the early starters will have all the early-starter advantage in this technology that is being built in the eastern states—namely, Bell Bay in Tasmania, Queensland and New South Wales, where industrial estates already exist or they are building new industrial facilities for it. Western Australia is missing out.

Every member opposite should be fundamentally ashamed of the lack of performance of their government in this area. We are missing the start of the most important opportunity for the most significant future industry in the world, not only in Australia but also Western Australia, because of a lack of investment and a lack of effort by this government. The government can come out with all the flash press releases it likes, all the green statements it likes and all the distractions it likes, but the fundamental bottom line here is that Western Australia is missing out on tens of thousands of jobs. Already, thousands of high-quality, high-paying and exciting jobs have gone to the eastern states just for one of our major companies in Western Australia that should be investing here. An absolute travesty has occurred under this government. It is clear that this government has no proper economic plan. It is clear, even in opportunities that this government itself has identified, that it prefers to focus on short-term politicking rather than on doing the hard, important work to ensure we have a proper future—an investment in the future for our children and grandchildren having high-quality work in this state.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [4.39 pm]: I rise to contribute to this important motion brought to the house by the Leader of the Liberal Party, which states —

That this house condemns the Labor government for allowing our state to miss opportunities for economic diversification and growth in critical sectors, impacting our long-term future.

It is, of course, our long-term future that we are talking about here. We are living through a pandemic and that colours many of the decisions being made both here and around the world. However, in the long term, we need to ensure we have a diversified and strong economy. The member for Cottesloe spoke a little bit about the importance

of onshore gas. I note that it is 50-odd years since onshore gas development began in this state, in Dongara. I was privileged to be in Dongara last week for the opening of stage 3 of the Waitsia development up there and to see it happening in the area I represent, which is good because there will be jobs there for the local community for years to come. I think the member for Cottesloe touched upon the many other opportunities in that region, including Oakajee and the need for some common facilities, if you like, and better electricity connections to that site, which is nothing more than a bit of bush at the moment. Also, we need to look at how other areas can develop exciting proposals for hydrogen facilities from Dongara all the way up to the far north of the state. All through that area, proponents who have ideas, vision, experience and technology are coming forward. However, I am hearing from a lot of them that they are not getting the ear of or the necessary support from government to ensure those projects can go ahead. There is a plea there for the government to do more to ensure that these fledgling industries can get underway. If anyone happened to be watching Andrew Forrest's contribution on Monday on the television program *Flashpoint*, they would have seen that it was very instructive when he spoke about the value of hydrogen in the future being multitrillions of dollars in contrast with our huge iron ore industry, which is comparatively minor compared with the potential value of hydrogen. That is why he is pushing it in a big way. As the member for Cottesloe said, Andrew Forrest is moving to establish a hydrogen industry in other states to do that. It is pretty clear as a Western Australian that it is probably not something he would do if he was getting the necessary support here.

Dr A.D. Buti: We have a hydrogen industry here.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The Minister for Lands is fundamentally one of those ministers who has contributed to the big fail at this point, so I do not think he should be shouting out.

Dr A.D. Buti: What's the fail?

Mr R.S. LOVE: We will hear from other members in more detail about those matters.

Dr A.D. Buti: You have no idea.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A.E. Scaife): Minister for Finance!

Mr R.S. LOVE: I do have a fairly good idea. I was Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Lands. I know what you have not been doing since you guys have been in government for nearly five years.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister for Finance, I call you to order for the first time. I give the call to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Thank you. He has done nothing to progress the diversity of economic opportunity in the rangelands, which is fundamentally one of the flaws impeding the ability to develop hydrogen in the rangelands area, so do not shout at me, minister; go and do your job.

We know that economic diversity is essential to our economy if we want to go forward.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr R.S. LOVE: We have had a great boom in the last few years. We have seen the expansion in China ramp up demand for iron ore to extraordinary levels. Of course, China has been buying iron ore from us because it has had little choice about where to buy it because, as we know, Brazil has had its problems. We also know that we cannot afford to bury our head in the sand and we cannot expect to live off the iron ore boom forever. We need to use this opportunity to grow our economy in many other areas. It is not a matter of just servicing the existing iron ore industry. We need to ensure that we have a wide diversity of mineral industries. We have very rich mineral provinces in many areas. We need to ensure that good regimes are in place so that future mining industries and future mines can develop.

One of the other issues that is brewing and has been spoken about here is the need to develop and put in place appropriate Aboriginal heritage legislation. We know that is essential and that the development of new minerals, new mines and new opportunities throughout the state will stall if Western Australia does not act quickly and with a genuine attempt to provide a legislative framework that will enable the Aboriginal cultural heritage of our area to be celebrated, retained and protected while also allowing for the appropriate exploration and use of land. The report that was handed down is crystal clear in its call for the commonwealth to come in over the top of all the states with overarching legislation to protect Aboriginal cultural heritage in a similar way that the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act is there for the environment.

We have worked through a process of trying to do away with a dual environmental approval system. We have done our bit with changes to the Environmental Protection Act. As yet, a single approvals process under those two acts has not been recognised at the commonwealth level. We do not want to see that situation replicated for Aboriginal cultural heritage. We need a process that is clear and does not involve decision-making both in Canberra and in Western Australia. We want to see a one-stop shop that is fair, open and appropriate, but something has to be done and done quickly to ensure that our processes are in place that satisfy the need to protect our heritage and enable future development to occur.

Getting back to the iron ore situation, we know that China has been a huge part of that demand and we know that there have been increasing trade tensions with China in many, many areas. I have heard it all blamed on a call by the federal government to understand where the current COVID pandemic outbreak occurred and to look at those circumstances. That call by the federal government is regularly blamed for all the problems we see manifested in the trade situation with China. However, I draw members' attention to what happened with barley. I am talking about the crop barley, not the island! In November 2018, before COVID was even known—this is now three years ago—China initiated anti-dumping measures and a countervail investigation into Australian barley exported to China between 1 October 2017 and 20 September 2018. The allegation was that there was dumping. The Chinese conducted an 18-month investigation and the Chinese Ministry of Commerce ruled that both dumping and subsidisation had occurred and it imposed an 80.5 per cent tariff on Australian barley. This vulnerability to actions by the Chinese central government is not new. I think we need to remember that when we blame the current Prime Minister for all the woes that occur in our trade with China. A lot of work was put into getting a free trade agreement. To provide a bit of context, my electorate, for instance, is where a lot of the rock lobster catch was taken. For years I knew there was a thing called the “grey trade”, whereby large amounts of rock lobster were sent to Vietnam, Hong Kong and other places and smuggled over the borders in backpacks or some other way, to arrive in China. It created a premium product but in no way was it the proper way to conduct the trade. Of course, the value of that produce was being lost as it was being handled in that inappropriate way. At long last, trade was able to occur freely and rock lobster could be delivered straight to markets in China. We now know that that has been stopped and I note the reports in the last couple of days of Hong Kong authorities—now part of the mainland authorities—seizing, I think, 5 300 kilograms, or 5.3 tonnes, of lobster, and arresting 13 people involved in that grey trade, which, once again, has had to kick off because China has closed its doors to the Australian product. We need to have a diverse economy. We cannot rely upon one customer and we cannot rely upon one product.

Another example is wine exports. A report highlighted in *The West Australian* yesterday showed that wine exports to China have slumped to a dramatic low after hefty tariffs were imposed in November last year. We have to accept that we need a diverse economy. We need a diversity not only of product and type of industries, but also where those industries find their markets. We still have strong demand for iron ore and many other products. We need to capitalise on that and make sure that we have the necessary workforce in place to make the most of these opportunities that in some cases are once-in-a-generation opportunities. If we do not capitalise on them, they will not remain in place.

I note that a recently released Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia business confidence survey says that the Western Australian economy is short 55 000 workers. That shortfall is set to cost business \$1.5 billion over the next year. Just one-third, or 35 per cent, of vacancies in Western Australia are expected to be filled by local workers. It is obvious that we need to have a workforce to make the most of our opportunities so that we can diversify our economy, we can get into the new economies such as hydrogen and critical minerals and we can take advantage of the exciting opportunities that our abundance of natural gas provides both as a transitional fuel through the transition to net zero emissions and in its ability to contribute directly to the development of blue hydrogen as a stepping stone towards a full green hydrogen industry. One company is looking to develop a urea plant in my area so that in the future we can help Western Australian farmers have access to urea that has a lower carbon footprint than the stuff that is imported from China. That will be helpful for Australian agriculture to help the rest of the country achieve net zero emissions. The agricultural industry has tremendous concerns about the change to net zero. I also understand that there are tremendous opportunities in carbon sequestration in soil et cetera. The Nationals WA have taken the position of ensuring that Western Australia move to a net zero position by 2050. If industries need assistance getting there or if communities need help in that process, that help should be made available to them. We are not going to do what this government did to the forestry industry in the south west and announce changes overnight that are ill-conceived, politically contrived and poorly delivered. We will not be doing that. We will work to ensure that when any changes occur as we strive towards net zero by 2050, the people of Western Australia are brought along for that journey, along with the industries that we represent right through our broad church of electorates across the state, including our alliance partners in some beautiful parts of the south west, important parts of the metropolitan area, including Cottesloe, and, of course, the vast areas of the north west and the Agricultural Region. There are opportunities throughout those areas that we need to grasp. We need a government with vision that will think past the easy path of riding on the back of the current iron ore situation and hoping that will last forever because we know that it will not. We need to take the opportunities as they arise and we need the workforce to be able to do that.

I am sure that the member for Vasse will outline just how parlous the state of our health system in Western Australia is at the moment, and how that is dictating our current reluctance to set firm targets and set a firm road map out of the situation we are in now, where we cannot even get critical workers in anymore. It is one thing that we cannot have family reunions and tourism but it is another that we cannot get the critical workforce we need to fill those 55 000 jobs. If we do not get those 55 000 jobs filled, imagine what opportunities we will lose. Imagine what extra demand there will be simply by having those wages flowing through our economy. That would be a huge boost to our economy, which would have a multiplier effect for years to come. The state of our health system is really holding it back. The reluctance of this government to look critically at how to overcome those shortages is something I am sure the member for Roe will talk about because he has long been an advocate for the agricultural areas to have

workers available to harvest products, to get the strawberries picked, to harvest the bananas in Carnarvon and whatever else needs to be done. The member for North West Central, who is sitting behind me, has been a great advocate for the tourism industry and small business, which also need workers. There is a shortage of 55 000 workers. Mines are short of workers. I am not saying this in a blasé way because I know the mining industry has huge problems, but it can afford to pay good money to get workers instead of getting those workers from other industries at the expense of other industries. That highlights the fact that the other industries I have just spoken about—the farming sector, small businesses and the tourism industry—simply cannot compete on the price of labour.

Today we heard the announcement by the Western Australian government about the way forward.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr R.S. LOVE: Apparently, Western Australia will have a very high bar of mandatory vaccination for a wide range of industries, probably most of the Western Australian workforce. Interestingly, one of the industries that already has a mandatory level of vaccination, with its workers having had to be vaccinated by 15 October, I think, employ the workers on the wharves. The wharfies have been on strike for four or five weeks. How long has it been, member for Roe? It has been months, has it not?

Mr P.J. Rundle: Three.

Mr R.S. LOVE: It has been three months. That strike has been going on for a while. Out of the blue, on Saturday, I believe about a quarter of them did not show up for their first day back at work because they were not vaccinated. We already have a severe workforce shortage. In the midst of that, the only response we have to engage Western Australians to get them to vaccinate so we can get to the level we need to protect the community is to mandate that they have a vaccine. Some will not take up the offer. Then we will have an even more acute worker shortage.

Mr P.J. Rundle: They were a Labor-affiliated union.

Mr R.S. LOVE: It is not just them. People working in other areas are saying they do not want to go down that path. I do not agree with them. I am vaccinated. I support the need for people to be vaccinated. To go down the path of mandatory vaccination in virtually every industry at a time when we are already short of workers is quite counterproductive. I question its value. I question the whole approach of turning our vaccine strategy into policing it and enforcing it, when we have done nothing to convince Western Australians of the need to get vaccinated. We have done very little to ensure that places are available to get vaccinated. I have spoken before in this place about the Shire of Chapman Valley and the lack of available vaccines for people in that area. On Saturday, *The West Australian* reported that one of the farmers there had said that he tried to get an appointment in Northampton, but the number rings out. People are time-poor. We have to enable people to get vaccinated. Nothing has been done to ensure that regional people actually have the ability or the opportunity to go and get vaccinated. What have we done to put the message out there? We have put the message out as a mandate: "You must get it done."

I know that the Minister for Health says that this is a commonwealth responsibility, but we have a very low level of vaccination amongst Aboriginal people. Our Vaccine Commander is the head of the police. I would have thought that if the government wants to encourage Aboriginal people to get vaccinated, it might use someone that they feel connected to, maybe Ernie Dingo or some other outstanding Aboriginal member of the community who could be giving the message and encouraging people to go and get vaccinated, to counter some of the ridiculous propaganda that is being fed around Aboriginal communities to scare people away from having the vaccine. In my view, we need to do that as a matter of some urgency. We need to forget the finger-pointing about who is responsible for what. A lot of Aboriginal people do not live in remote Western Australia; a lot of Aboriginal people live in Narrogin, York, Beverley and Cranbrook, and in Perth as well, so, along with the general population, they need to be reassured and given the opportunity.

As far as the public health campaign goes, it is a complete fail. It has just been non-existent. I am still seeing smoking ads, like the one that shows someone wringing tar out of their lungs. We are in the middle of a pandemic and we need people to get vaccinated. The government should spend all its money on public health advertising on this one message. It should not worry about asking people to get the flu or measles shot or to give up smoking; it should put all its eggs into trying to convince people rather than forcing them to go and get vaccinated. Let people know that if they get vaccinated in sufficient numbers, we can navigate a path to a point in the future when we will be able to travel more freely, fill all the jobs we have and provide a decent future for our children, who have been struggling under this regime for the last couple of years. Yes, everyone is safe and being kept safe here in Western Australia at this point, and we have not had much in the way of COVID, but people need opportunities as well. At some point in the future, we are going to have to get back to a more normal situation whereby our young people can travel, take up opportunities at universities across the world, learn other cultures and have the experiences that everybody in this room has had the opportunity to have in their lifetime.

I urge the Western Australian government to rethink its course, because unless we have a vaccination program that is more encouraging—more of the carrot and less of the stick—we are not going to solve the many problems, such as skill shortages, that Western Australian industry faces and we are not going to get all the benefits that Western Australia could have from a road map out of the current situation.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe) [5.03 pm]: I rise to also support the very good motion moved today by the member for Cottesloe on the fact that this Labor government is missing many opportunities that are imperative for the economic diversification of our state, which has adversely impacted WA's industry growth and development.

I am glad that the Minister for Health is here. I heard his figures in question time today about the increase in maternity workers and so forth, but we in Katanning are still waiting for the health minister to come forth. We still have no maternity arrangements in Katanning, but with his 12 per cent increase in maternity workers and staff, I look forward to him visiting us in the not-too-distant future and giving us some good news about the recommencement of the maternity arrangements in Katanning. That is beside the point, but I thought it was important to bring it up, given the numbers that he came out with in question time today.

Member for North West Central, I start by talking about my disappointment with the Minister for Agriculture and Food. I read in Saturday morning's paper that the agricultural minister was standing in a green crop, asking how green the crop has to get before it can be harvested. What actually happens is the crop ripens and goes brown and yellow, then it is harvested. Farmers do not wait for it to get greener.

Mr V.A. Catania: I think she was talking about the policies of the Labor Party.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: It was concerning to hear that from the minister who is meant to be representing the agricultural sector in WA, member for North West Central. There is a concern right there. We have a minister who has to get a grip on what happens in harvesting and the fact that we need people to help farmers harvest their crops.

I do not think it is any secret that the minister has dropped the ball. I refer to some of the scenarios with the Bladin Village debacle. Farmers are sick of deflection from this government. People can listen to the *WA Country Hour* radio show at lunchtime every day of the week, but no answers are being supplied by this government. We have a real concern about Bladin Village, because the Premier and the ag minister were seemingly working at cross-purposes. I will say that, at the time, the ag minister did show some genuine concern. She understood that we need farmers, farm workers and skilled operators, because a lot of these harvesters, field bins and pieces of equipment are getting up close to a million dollars now, and we need skilled labour to operate them.

I will give members a bit of a history lesson. The federal Minister for Agriculture and Northern Australia, David Littleproud, was quoted as saying that Premier McGowan and all Premiers reaffirmed on 11 December 2020 at national cabinet that they would maintain responsibility for the quarantining of agricultural workers. That is what he told *The West Australian*. The agreed process was that the Premiers were to write to the Prime Minister with their quarantine arrangements and the commonwealth would process the visas, and that process has not changed. We know that Christmas Island was not suitable, so the commonwealth government put up Bladin Point in the Northern Territory as an option if our state government could negotiate with the Northern Territory government.

I want to go back through a bit of the history here. On 7 September 2021, I asked the Premier about skilled agriculture workers. His response to me was to defer it to the federal government. He said that the federal government controls the international borders and that is it. We have the Work and Wander Out Yonder campaign and that is great. Well, I am sorry. On 7 September, when we raised our matter of public interest, I quoted Minister MacTiernan, who said, "It's too hard; it's too difficult. I've tried, but I just can't quite deliver it." I believe that the ag minister was trying to deliver it, but we had the Premier, who was still playing his games, trying to deflect to the federal government and blame it for anything possible. It is quite bizarre, because this government has extracted billions of dollars out of the federal government for the transport network and many other infrastructure projects; however, it seems to almost take pleasure in criticising the federal government. It has come to a point where the federal government has said, "No, that's not on". On this occasion, the federal government said it could get these skilled workers in, but that the Premier and the agriculture minister needed to work with the Northern Territory. Unfortunately, the Premier chose to play politics instead.

We now have a \$7 billion crop out there. I know that some of the crops that were being harvested up around Geraldton before the rain came in yesterday were going really well. The price of canola is right up there and it is really essential that we get our crop off. That is \$7 billion for this state economy, and we need to work hard. I think the pattern set in when the Premier forgot to include the agricultural sector in his skills summit. It was not until the Western Australian Farmers Federation and the Pastoralists and Graziers Association reminded the Premier that he ought to include the agricultural sector in a skills summit that it was invited. It was before it started, but that was a bit of an indication of how the second-biggest industry in Western Australia, after mining, seems to have been forgotten. I cannot reiterate this enough: we are going to see a period over the next couple of months in which farmers are going to be working 14, 16 or 18 hours a day, and I am worried about the work health and safety aspect. They have a valuable crop. This government does not seem to have been able to round up any skilled workers and I think we have some real issues coming up. I hope it does not happen. The federal government has spent nearly \$300 billion over the COVID period. The state government has a \$5.8 billion surplus and it has done very little to help get skilled workers.

I will now move on to the port dispute, which the member for Moore referred to. I will take members back to estimates in which, obviously, I asked the Premier about Bladin Village. He said we could use the Defence Force and any other arrangements he could think of. It flowed onto the situation at the port.

I asked the Premier —

Is the Premier aware that a massive amount of farm machinery and equipment is being held up at Fremantle port that will potentially jeopardise farmers getting harvesters, parts and the like on-farm to help with the harvest?

The Premier replied —

Which line item in the budget papers did the member refer to?

I said it was about the supply chain in paragraph 4 on page 223. The Premier replied —

I will ask the director general. I have not heard of that before, but, as the member knows, the stevedoring companies are companies and therefore come under the commonwealth industrial relations system.

This was nine weeks into the industrial dispute at Fremantle wharf. There was agricultural equipment and mining equipment there, and Dale Alcock wrote the other day that there was building equipment and cars. All parts of the economy were being affected but, nine weeks into the strike, the Premier said he was not aware of it. I am still in a state of shock about that one. I certainly got a reminder about it from one of my constituents who had three harvesters on a boat and was trying to get them. Now, thanks to the Maritime Union of Australia dispute with Qube, the harvesters were shipped back to Melbourne. Somehow, they have to get back across to Western Australia. Who will pay for that? I bet the MUA will not pay for the transport.

Several members interjected.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Maybe Hon Kyle McGinn; he was talking about how fantastic the MUA is in his contribution in the other place. Maybe he will contribute out of his electorate allowance, but somehow I doubt it. It is quite disturbing to me that this has happened. It took people like Dale Alcock and many of our members to raise this. Hon Michaelia Cash eventually had to intervene after 12 weeks.

Several members interjected.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: We certainly did not see any assistance from the state Labor government. That is what this motion is all about.

Several members interjected.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: What were we doing about it? I will tell members what happened. Eventually, after 11 and a half weeks, the Minister for Transport came in here and read out a statement that said she had written to the Fair Work Commission that day. That is what happened, 11 and a half weeks later. That is what the state Labor government has done for our farm workers and for our farm equipment, mining equipment, building equipment and cars that were all stuck at Fremantle port. It finally wrote to the Fair Work Commission after 11 and a half weeks. It is very disappointing. I am not frightened to say that I am disappointed. We seem to have had a few years in which there have not been a lot of strikes—that has been good to see—despite the fact that the salary cap has been in place. Obviously, the government has been working with the unions to keep a lid on them, but now other things are starting to play out. That was the first disappointment.

The second disappointment was the timber industry. The member for Cottesloe referred to it earlier. I want to start with a bit of a history lesson here as well. Back on 13 August 2020, an ABC News article reported that state Greens MP Diane Evers had admitted that campaigning for getting rid of native forest logging was an important issue ahead of the next election. In a statement, forestry minister Dave Kelly said that most native forests were not available to be harvested. Essentially, more than 334 000 hectares of old-growth forest was protected. The article continues —

“The Forests Product Commission has access to 38 per cent of our native forest estate ...

“[It] annually harvests less than one per cent of this allocation.”

Mr Kelly said every hectare of native forest harvested was regenerated.

Everything was not going too badly. On 3 December 2019, Minister Kelly welcomed, praised and encouraged the investment by Queensland company Parkside Timber in the south west. He said the company would increase local jobs and reopen timber mills, and that this would move closer to —

... native forestry’s transformation into a resilient, future industry that can deal with the challenges of utilising smaller logs from regrowth forests.

Minister Kelly also said —

“The McGowan Government sees Parkside’s investment as a step forward in maintaining a strong forestry industry that supports WA jobs, while still protecting the environmental values of our beautiful native forests.

What have we got now? Even less than two years later, the Minister for Environment and the Minister for Forestry have come down and pulled the rug out from underneath our south west towns and their sawmilling. It is one of the most disappointing things I have ever seen. It goes along with the program that this government seems to be employing, which is to cut first and consult later. That seems to be the latest theme—cut first and consult later. We

saw it with the crayfishing industry. We saw it with the Schools of the Air. We saw it with Moora Residential College. We saw it with the agricultural college trust fund. We are now seeing it with the marine parks. The government said, “We are going to have five million hectares of marine and land-based parks. We’ll announce it and we’ll worry about consulting later.”

The government’s decision is not going down well in communities such as Esperance. They have absolutely no idea what the plan is, whether there will be any sanctuary zones and, if there are sanctuary zones, what they will be. Recreational and commercial fishers are coming to my office because the government has not done the consultation. As I said, it is cut first, consult later, which is quite a disappointment. The government’s forestry decision is the biggest disappointment, particularly in the context of the *Djarlma plan for the Western Australian forestry industry: A framework for action 2019–2030*, which was released in 2019. It is a joint project between the Forest Industries Federation of Western Australia, the state government and the Forest Products Commission. The plan sets out strategic directions for the entire Western Australian forest industry and provides a strategic framework to achieve long-term regional economic wellbeing, employment and investment to foster ecologically sustainable development and to provide social and environmental benefits. What happened? It was an opportunity to support transformative change towards a more sustainable future for Western Australia. What happened to the Djarlma plan? It was a strategic plan and framework, but the rug has been pulled straight out from underneath it. Communities such as Manjimup and Nannup are not happy. I will say that the Minister for Forestry turned up in Manjimup a few weeks ago after the outcry and spoke to the likes of the shire council, but it was too little, too late. There was no consultation.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Another thing that worries me is that we will have to import timber from places such as Indonesia and South America, which have no sustainable practices whatsoever. As I said last week, the government is appealing to the inner-city green vote—that is great—and we can see how that plan is playing out with its decision to remove regional representation from the upper house. We can see how the appeal to the inner-city green vote is going; once again, the regions have been forgotten. As the member for Cottesloe pointed out, the Forest Products Commission will be battling to buy land in areas where rainfall is more than 650 millimetres per year because of the price and availability of land. I note that the Forest Products Amendment Bill 2021 was introduced into the chamber today. It will amend the Forest Products Act to allow the FPC to buy land, but as the member for Cottesloe pointed out, it will take years, probably 20 years, to get timber from those pine forests. I do not know where the jobs will be in the intervening 20 years. It is quite bizarre and it is quite short-sighted, to be honest.

We need a more integrated and strategic plan. Our regional industries need support. I express my disappointment at what has played out over not only the last five years, with education cuts and the like, but also the last six months or so since the government came in with its majority in both houses. Electoral reform was not on its agenda, but in it came. It has started to pull the rug out from beneath our regional industries. Regional people and regional communities deserve some equity. This government is taking the morale out of our regional communities. Yes, the Premier has kept our regional communities safe and strong, and I acknowledge that they voted for him, but as we have seen in the last couple of days, and as the member for Moore indicated, there is no plan. Our communities are looking for guidance. We are not looking for the Premier to come out with one of his thought bubbles every second day that depends on his popularity rating and a survey: “Am I at 87 per cent or 90 per cent?” This state needs a plan and the regions of WA deserve equity and representation.

MR V.A. CATANIA (North West Central) [5.24 pm]: I rise to support the motion moved by the Leader of the Liberal Party —

That this house condemns the Labor government for allowing our state to miss opportunities for economic diversification and growth in critical sectors, impacting our long-term future.

I echo the words of my colleagues who spoke about many issues in their shadow portfolios. However, on the back of the contribution of the member for Roe, I will talk about how this government is all about spin. This government is all about focus groups and policymaking on the run, on the day. That is what the government is about, and we have seen that, from day one with the promises that were made prior to the 2017 election, to where we sit today. The Premier said that there would be rolled-gold accountability for the Labor government he leads. He may lead it for now, members, but that rolled-gold accountability is just not there. The spin and arrogance that is plaguing this government is causing concern throughout Western Australia’s industry and community, and we have seen that with the government’s most recent decisions.

We have an opportunity to diversify. We hear the word “diversification”: “Let’s diversify, let’s protect the economy.” The Leader of the Liberal Party, the member for Cottesloe, suggested we diversify with hydrogen—hydrogen, hydrogen, hydrogen. Members who watched Monday night’s episode of *Flashpoint* would have seen Andrew Forrest talking about diversifying the economy—here is that opportunity. Anyone who knows about and understands hydrogen knows that the hydrogen industry is now basically where we were with iron ore in the 1960s. We have a blank canvas to develop an industry that will transform our resources sector and the way that we operate as a society as a whole. More importantly, the Nationals WA have a policy of net zero emissions by 2050, and the hydrogen opportunity will ensure we reach that target, perhaps much earlier than 2050. I hope that that is the case.

We hear that hydrogen is the key to diversifying the economy and, like I said, the hydrogen opportunity is the same now as what the iron ore opportunity was in the 1960s. We can sort out land tenure and agreements, but it will not be like it was with the iron ore industry in the 1960s because it did not know what was going to happen in 2021. Here is our opportunity, because we know about our resources—the abundance of solar, wind and land. We can develop a hydrogen industry to clean up industry locally and export hydrogen around the world. What an opportunity!

This government has basically thumbed its nose at a person who is trying to right the wrongs of the past. As we all know, iron ore is a large contributor to greenhouse emissions. Andrew Forrest is trying to turn his company around and ensure that it is operating on clean green hydrogen—clean green energy. What an opportunity. He is a Western Australian who is spending his own money to develop a hydrogen industry here in Australia, and he wants to do it in Western Australia, but it is not happening because it is not on the government's agenda. That is the arrogance that has crept in and is causing Western Australian industry concern.

The government should be saying, "Okay, we want to meet our net zero emissions target." I do not know whether that is Labor Party policy or government yet, but this is an opportunity to meet those targets. What can we do to assist an emerging industry that is going to transform Western Australia and the world? Western Australians could be world leaders in hydrogen, yet the government resorts to, "We're not going to help multinationals." Last time I checked, Andrew Forrest was not a multinational but a bloody good Western Australian. He is investing in philanthropic areas, development of the pastoral industry, tourism and the environment. For example, look at what is happening in Exmouth, with research opportunities at the Ningaloo Centre. He is giving back to the community.

The Premier has tall poppy syndrome and is dismissive of everyone else; we have seen that here in the house. We have seen how dismissive he is of the opposition's important questions. He is dismissive and arrogant and makes personal attacks and accusations. This so-called leader of the McGowan Labor government is clearly not a true statesman in his position as Premier of Western Australia. If I want to go down the Premier's path, let us look at his inferior, lackadaisical, incompetent cabinet.

Mr P.J. Rundle: No-one else is good enough to be Treasurer, apparently.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: He cannot trust anyone else to be Treasurer because it is all about control. We have seen how the Premier likes control, and it is concerning. As I have said before in this house, industry people are saying, "We're very concerned about the control the Premier has and how we cannot put our suggestions forward unless it is his idea." Businesses and industry association groups are fearful because of this government's vitriol. If things are not aligned with its thinking, it will come after you. That is what is happening. The Premier may still be relatively popular, but his popularity is waning. He likes to attack others, like the New South Wales Premier, although I have not seen a lot of criticism of the Victorian Premier. He criticises Andrew Forrest and what he is trying to do, and other people of note in this country. He is very dismissive of everyone. Perhaps the tall poppy syndrome will at some point be reversed—the tall poppy syndrome that the Premier clearly displays—and he will be cut down and be revealed for what he is really like.

A lot of opposition members, having been on the other side of the chamber at some point, know what the Premier is like. His true colours are coming out, as is the true nature of the Labor Party, as I have said before. The left controls both the sails and the rudder. We are starting to see that with some of the policies that are coming out and plaguing the Labor Party because the left is in control. We have seen that in both the recent timber industry decision and in the electoral reform legislation, which will cut regional voices. The list goes on.

The rot started back in December 2017 when the Labor government tried to get rid of the Schools of the Air—an iconic institution that provides education to kids in regional WA. The government tried to take it away, but in true form, after some public pressure, the Premier changed his mind because he has a glass jaw. The pressure did not come from regional WA, but from the metropolitan area. I say again: the electoral reform the Premier is putting through will take away regional voices and our ability to fight for things like the Schools of the Air, Moora Residential College and community resource centres. The people of Perth are concerned, because they wonder what will happen to them.

Let us look at the issues plaguing this state. The Premier can say, "We've got freedoms." Yes, we have freedoms, but they are limited freedoms; they are freedoms with conditions. No-one on this side of the house is saying, "Let's bring COVID in"; it is about dealing with the circumstances that are presenting themselves in this state at this point in time and that were forecast. The member for Roe referred to the agricultural sector and its need for workers. The same thing applies for the tourism industry. It is unable to get workers to fill positions in cafes, hotels, motels and other small businesses. There is a huge need for workers, and that was forecast when COVID first hit.

The McGowan Labor government said, "We're going to keep you safe and strong, and how good is the economy?" We all know that 30 per cent of Western Australia's economy is based on the resources sector, and some of it on the construction sector. We have two industries that make up nearly half the economic drivers of this state. The government talks about how wonderful the economy is, but it is not all beer and skittles.

We saw what happened with Frontier Lighting, and I commend the Premier for writing to the Prime Minister to try to change the federal government's loans criteria. There are a lot of businesses that rely on interstate and international travel, such as Frontier Lighting, which provides lighting for venues, and they are suffering the consequences of what is happening in Victoria and New South Wales. Why should they not be able to access federal government loans? It is different from having to go to a bank; that is the whole point. The criteria need to change to assist those businesses. They need financial support to stay alive.

We know that at some point we will get back to normal, or a new normal, and that new normal involves ensuring that we have a plan to open up to the rest of the country and the rest of the world. That is going to happen at some point. As the Leader of the Opposition said, we need a safe plan going forward. We all agree with that. However, many small businesses still need workers, such as those in tourism, agriculture and hospitality. There is still uncertainty around the government's decision-making and its far-left policies that are becoming law, and that is concerning.

Here in Western Australia we have the opportunity to hold the Surf Life Saving Championships, the Australian Track and Field Championships and the Commonwealth Games, but the government is not thinking about the long-term prosperity of Western Australia. The government is not thinking about the Commonwealth Games in 2026. If we are still in this position in 2026 of having closed borders or restrictions, we will have major problems. We have to be positive. Businesses need certainty and the tourism and resource sectors need to be able to plan for the future. A good way of planning for the future is to give gold medals to all Western Australians because they have been playing their part and keeping Western Australia safe. The government should give them a gold medal and make a bid for the Commonwealth Games so businesses in the Perth CBD and metropolitan area can fill hotels and capture what they have lost over the past two years.

We need to get businesses in the CBD going, get our tourism going and sell our wonderful city and state to the rest of the world. Because of the uncertainty at the moment, we are selling the message: "Don't come to Western Australia because we can't give you any certainty for 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026 or at any time in the future to book carnivals, games, functions and other things." We need certainty so organisations from around the world can come to Western Australia. We promote how wonderful the state is and the opportunities that are here, so let us continue that. Let us build on what the Premier says: "How lucky are we?" We will be lucky only when we open up when every other state opens up—but we have missed the boat because we did not put up our hands for the Commonwealth Games or anything else.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr V.A. CATANIA: We have missed the opportunity to secure things such as the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships and the Australian Track and Field Championships. The list goes on. Perhaps we could have got the AFL grand final again. The government is not thinking about the future. People often criticise governments and politicians for thinking in only four-year terms. Here is our opportunity to plan for the next 10 years, to make sure that what has been done in terms of a buoyant tourism industry outside regional WA—not in all sectors, but in most, because Western Australians have had nowhere else to go. That has given a bit of a leg-up to regional tourism, but our tourism operators in the city need a hand. We have not able to capitalise on what has been happening because of a lack of investment.

I come back to the rhetoric, slogans and spin that the government has been putting over Western Australians in keeping Western Australia safe and strong. But we are not safe and we are not strong. We can only measure those things against the way in which our health system operates or the way in which law and order operates.

I was glad to see that the Minister for Tourism was in Exmouth the other day. I am sure that he heard about the same issues that I hear about around the safety of people in places like Exmouth, Coral Bay or the region. Having only four officers looking after potentially 50 000 people puts a bit of pressure on the community. There are not enough ambulance volunteers to service Coral Bay, which can have 5 000 or 8 000 visitors there any one time. There has been a lack of investment in our health system. I go back to Exmouth. Members can talk about code yellows in the city, but did members know that Exmouth Health Service could not take more patients because it was full? Regional hospitals are also bursting at the seams.

We are hearing about keeping people safe and strong and a health crisis that is preventing people from getting elective surgery now, but what is going to happen in the future? There has been a lack of investment. The only way I can describe it is by referring to what was happening when the McGowan Labor government came to office in 2017. There was basically a trading halt in this state when the Labor Party came to government because there was no investment in health, housing, law and order, education and so forth. That trading halt existed for two and a half to three years. Now, we are paying the price of the government not keeping pace with the investment that was needed in our health system and in housing. The government was chasing its tail. I do not need to be Einstein to work it out. The media has been talking about it. Everyone has been talking about it. That is why the borders and restrictions are in place. We need to get the health system to a certain level. We all know that. I think most people support that, but why was the government not able to make sure that the health system could cope with any COVID outbreak or elective surgery—the run-of-the-mill and general health needs of the state? Why has the government not been able to achieve that? That is the question.

The Minister for Health should not be asking the shadow Minister for Health to walk down the street and ask whether people want to keep COVID out. That is not the question. The question is: Do people think our health system is strong enough to cater for any potential outbreak of COVID? Do they think our health system is able to cater for the health needs of Western Australians? I guarantee members that 95 per cent of people would say no.

We need to look at the spin of this government and what is motivating it. Former Premier Alan Carpenter was much like this—focus groups of the day were giving the government the policy of the day. That is what this government is doing. Focus groups are giving this government the policy of the day. That is what is happening.

Mr R.H. Cook: Didn't you support the Carpenter government?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I am trying to tell you where you went wrong. When you have minions like the member for Perth and the Minister for Transport —

Mr R.H. Cook interjected.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Who is behind the minister? It is the Minister for Emergency Services. That is what happened when all the minions of former Premier Alan Carpenter were in the office in 2008. This government is heading down the same path.

There is a lack of confidence and concern among industry, small business, tourism operators and the general public. Without consulting, the government is changing the voting system and industry with a signature. It makes announcements about COVID-19 grants for businesses that have been affected by lockdowns but works out the detail of those grants sometime down the track—and sometime down the track means that those businesses do not get those funds until maybe three or six months later. We saw that happen with cyclone Seroja in the midwest and Kalbarri. We have heard announcements, but people are still waiting for answers and action to follow the announcements. The government is always reactive rather than proactive. That is the message I am selling tonight: the government is reactive rather than proactive. We are seeing that in the health system. We are seeing that with the housing crisis and we are seeing that in the way the government dismisses any future opportunity for this state.

The Commonwealth Games is just one of those opportunities. That would be a great opportunity for our athletes, and for our businesses, our tourism operators and the people of Western Australia, to show the rest of the world how this state has been able to lead the way in not having COVID-19 outbreaks. We can show how we have been respectful to others, have had social distancing and have put on our masks when we have had to do that. We have done everything that the government has asked us to do.

However, we are now seeing the overreach of a government that is dictating to Western Australians what to do, how to do it and when to do it. We are seeing that dictatorial relationship occur when it comes to industry. Industry is providing a fantastic opportunity for the state with, as I said, hydrogen, hydrogen, hydrogen. That will transform the way we do energy. It will transform the way we will meet our carbon emissions targets. It will transform an industry that is one of the number one polluters in the world. That is in our backyard. It is in my electorate of North West Central, in the Gascoyne. Quite a few companies are looking at and doing the work that will be needed to develop a hydrogen industry in the Gascoyne and midwest. The National Party has a policy to develop a hydrogen hub in the Gascoyne and midwest to take advantage of what we have to offer: clean, green energy. That is not finite. There is an abundance of solar and an abundance of wind, particularly in the Gascoyne and midwest. Yet the government does not see this as an opportunity. Sir Charles Court saw the opportunity back in the 1960s when he developed state agreements for new industries. This state has been very fortunate to have those industries, because they have kept this state afloat and been the real economic driver for Western Australia.

The Premier has been using his spin to say, "How good is the economy! How good are we!" The Premier says that his government has been able to develop 100 000 or 150 000 jobs. Can the Premier detail those jobs and where they are, and how those jobs have come about? I do not want to swear, but as sure as the sun comes up in the morning and sets in the evening, those jobs have been developed by industry and by people like Andrew Forrest. Businesses that have been limited because of the constraints of government have developed those jobs. For this government to take credit for that, I do not think so.

I will end with this. I remember going to a business breakfast just before the 2008 election when the then Premier, Alan Carpenter, held up a photo of the Perth CBD skyline, and he counted 20-something cranes in the air and said, "Look at that! This government is developing Perth! Because of this government, we have got cranes!" Do members know what everyone said? They said, "The government has nothing to do with those cranes; my company is building that building" or, "My company is developing a mine in the north; it has nothing to do with the government." People are now starting to wake up to that arrogance. Western Australians are concerned that this government, at the stroke of pen, and without any debate in this house, can change policy, change legislation and change the way in which we vote. I say to members opposite: the people of Western Australia are starting to wake up. I think they have woken up. This is the slippery slope that second-term governments always go through. I took forward to coming back to this house early next year and seeing the percentage drop in the swing to the Labor Party, to the point that government backbenchers will start to squirm. If I were a government backbencher, I would be starting to squirm in 2022.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) [5.54 pm]: I rise to make a brief contribution in support of the motion that has been presented this evening. I rise to support the motion —

That this house condemns the Labor government for allowing our state to miss opportunities for economic diversification and growth in critical sectors, impacting our long-term future.

I support the many other speakers on this side, or in this corner of the house, who have spoken on the very worthy motion that was put forward by the Leader of the Liberal Party and member for Cottesloe. This motion highlights in particular the missed opportunity and the frustration that we are seeing among the small and medium business sector in particular. That has always been a major concern for us as Liberals, and I think it is fair to speak on behalf of the alliance in that respect as well.

There was a report this week in *The West Australian* on the Western Australian skills shortage and the significant impact that will have on the Western Australian economy. It said that 55 000 more workers are needed to fill the shortfall. This is a major concern right across the state. Chris Rodwell from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of WA has talked about what could happen if the attainment of skilled workers is not supported in this state, and about the structural change that will result from missed opportunities and opportunities going to other states.

The worker shortage also has real implications for small businesses. Already in the electorate of Vasse, which I represent, we are certainly seeing this across the hospitality sector and other sectors. Businesses are now making the difficult but very real decision to simply shut their doors. Recently, Little Fish restaurant in Yallingup closed, and Burger Bones in Busselton closed. Other businesses are restructuring and not opening as often, perhaps only three days a week. We are hearing that restaurants like Wills Domain are finding it increasingly difficult to get staff. Restaurants are obviously investing heavily in trying to get staff. As a consequence of the staff shortages that they are experiencing, they are able to open for only three to four days a week. They are unable to find people who are willing to work in a full-time position to provide that valuable service.

That raises the question again about this government's plan for Western Australia beyond COVID. We on this side of the house have outlined the importance of providing some clarity around what that plan will look like and when it will be safe to open this state. Of course, we know what the real issue is. The issue is obviously that our health system is not as prepared as it should be. That concern was expressed in response to the recent state budget, which had just a 1.38 per cent increase in operational expenditure, and a two per cent drop in health expenditure next year. The fact that the health system has been run down over the first term of the McGowan Labor government raises real questions about why 2 000 elective surgeries have been cancelled over the last two months. At a time when there is no COVID in the community, 2 000 elective surgeries have been cancelled over a two-month period. We have also seen the elective surgery list blow out by 50 per cent, from 19 000 to about 30 000 patients now on the elective surgery waiting list. In particular, those who have been waiting since August and September are experiencing pain and uncertainty. There is always an impact. We have heard of the impacts on livelihoods, but there is also the potential impact on the level of acuity, something the Minister for Health has often talked about. Elective surgery is also what the Liberal Party has understood to be one of the levers that this government will utilise in response to COVID in the community. It therefore raises questions about why the government is restricting and cancelling elective surgery at this time when there is no COVID in the community.

Another issue we have raised is intensive care unit beds. A report was released last week concerning ICU beds. It was concerning to see in the article published in the *Medical Journal of Australia* of 13 October that Western Australia has the lowest number of ICU beds in the country. Our per capita rate of ICU beds, of six per 100 000, falls behind every other state. It can be compared with 10.8 ICU beds per 100 000 people in New South Wales, and is also well below the national average of 8.5 ICU beds per 100 000 people. The Northern Territory has 8.1; Queensland, 7.9; and South Australia, 9.1. As I said, in WA we have just six ICU beds per 100 000 people. It again raises the questions about the extent to which this government has been doing its homework and the level of support the Minister for Health is receiving in terms of investment in our critical care areas and the number of beds in our hospitals. The government has a \$5.6 billion budget surplus, and over 20 months there has been very little COVID in the community. That raises the question of the state's preparedness for if and when COVID comes into the WA community.

The minister and the government have spoken much about relying on surge capacity. The report also points to the fact that relying on surge capacity will lead to lesser patient outcomes. That experience was highlighted in the report. The report pointed to experiences in the United States and Europe and highlighted that relying on surge capacity raises real concerns about the implications for our most vulnerable. Of course, this also raises the question of how we will support other vulnerable patients and those who might need to rely on an ICU. WA's ICU bed capacity is therefore concerning. It also raises the question of why we have the lowest number of available beds per capita in the country. Again, that raises the question of where this government's priorities are on our health preparedness and the state of our health system to fit in with supporting our economy as we go beyond COVID-19.

A great example, often referred to as the canary in the coalmine, is ambulance ramping. We have certainly touched on this a number of times. We know that in the month of August, the state experienced over 6 500 hours of ambulance ramping. By the minister's own measure, that is five to six times greater than a horror story. Ambulance ramping occurs when, due to bed block, hospitals are unable to receive patients, and ambulances are ramped outside hospitals.

As highlighted in the Department of Health's annual report, this has also led to priority 1 ambulance response times reaching very concerning levels. The hold-up of ambulances at our hospitals is leading to ambulances being unable to respond, or greatly restricted in responding, to emergencies out in the field. The issue of ambulance ramping, quite obviously, is understood to relate to the ability of our hospitals to accept patients. Statistics also indicate that there has been a consistent growth in the number of patients presenting to emergency departments, and that is also backed up by the Australian Medical Association and the Australian Nursing Federation. However, it is the capacity for patients to be accepted into hospitals that has resulted in the ambulance ramping situation, which is seeing patients increasingly being left waiting either in hallways with paramedics or in ambulances because they cannot be accepted by hospitals. I had a quick look and saw that this month there has already been over 3 000 hours of ramping, which is another staggering figure, given that 1 030 hours was a crisis and a horror story when the minister was in opposition. The government's response to this has been to try to stop these figures being reported. Obviously, we have raised concerns during the inquiry into this area. We know that it will be considered by government, but it points to the challenges our health system is facing and that it is quite obviously in crisis. It raises the question of the extent to which the lack of preparedness in our health system is holding this state back from having a clear plan going forward beyond COVID and beyond managing COVID. That is what the Leader of the Opposition in this place was asking for today in question time. It was disappointing to, once again, get political spin from the Premier in response to that question.

I will wrap up; I understand we will allow time for the government to respond. I will touch finally on the Western Australian Auditor General's report *Roll-out of state COVID-19 stimulus initiatives: July 2020–March 2021*, which was released today. This stimulus package had bipartisan support for the benefits that it would obviously bring to the WA economy by supporting WA businesses and the community during this challenging time of COVID. However, what I thought was quite stunning is that 47 per cent of the initiatives have not substantially used their allocated budgets. Of the total \$2.144 billion budget, 61 per cent was delivered through 30 initiatives, the vast majority as financial relief to citizens. For a number of reasons outlined in the report, this means that approximately \$800 million remains unspent. That raises concerns. The report highlights —

Of particular concern are the Department of Communities' social housing initiatives, which as of 31 March 2021, only ... (2%) of the \$319 million budget was spent.

That is an extraordinary figure. It is a lacklustre reflection of an initiative that should have been delivered with gusto. The Auditor General went on to state —

This leads me to a key recommendation of the report. When deciding on any future stimulus funding and relief measures, State government entities should consider predictable events in their planning such as market limitations (including reduced contractor and builder availability.) It's also important they improve their planning and coordination when initiatives are competing with one another, as is the case with social housing ...

We know the opportunity lost here is the taxpayers of Western Australia. This report is certainly very damning. It brings me back to the original motion that was moved by the Leader of the Liberal Party relating to economic diversification and supporting the diversification of critical sectors. That can happen only through the support of such initiatives, which we have not seen, and also by ensuring that our health system is as good as it can be. Unfortunately, not just during its first term, but also in response to the recent budget, the government's lacklustre recruitment drive of health workers is an indicator that illustrates the health system is in crisis without COVID in the community. This points to the fact that this government has dropped the ball in these key areas.

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade) [6.11 pm]: Madam Acting Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to speak on this motion. Of course, it is a motion that we will be strenuously opposing. Perhaps I am a bit naive—I have been in government for only five years—but I always thought that if a member brought a motion to this place, they would speak to it if they wanted to get the support of the majority of members. What we have seen today is simply a passing parade of debates past, and language, narrative and lines used in another context, in another time and in another place that bear no resemblance to this debate. It is extraordinary that we had such a flaccid effort on what is a very important issue—that is, the diversity of the Western Australian economy so that we can take advantage of the incredible strength we have because of our COVID-19 response. We are all looking forward to the economic reset that will ultimately occur when our international border opens. We will then have the opportunities that come with the greater movement of the workforce, the greater movement of trade and, in tandem with that, the new reality of the decarbonisation of our economies. These are exciting times. There are important decisions to be made. I thought it extraordinary and thoroughly disappointing that the opposition, while bringing an important issue to this place, failed almost to a man and a woman to speak to it.

I want to take the opportunity in the time we have available to talk about some of the initiatives and the approach of the government when it comes to the diversification of our economy. I have said on multiple occasions that we need to diversify our markets and we need to diversify our commodities. We need to make sure that we can develop other economic activities and sell them to a broader range of international markets. The government's plan for a strong and diversified economy is about delivering secure, quality jobs through increased investment across

a broad range of industries. This vision was articulated in the *Diversify WA* report, which we released in July 2019 and which was since revised in 2020. It sets out how we will go about pivoting from the global pandemic to take advantage of the opportunities that come with that. That is about making sure that as a government, we have a competitive advantage in some priority sectors, we focus on them and we start to nurture and really foster those particular priorities to ensure that we can take advantage of the opportunities and jobs that come with them. They are essentially energy; tourism, events and creative industries; primary industries; international education; mining and mining engineering and technical services; defence industry; space; and health and medical life sciences. The *Diversify WA* report also emphasises the importance of cross-sector activities in science, innovation and technology, advanced manufacturing, supply chain development, environmental science and governance frameworks.

We know that in the future, as we seek to grow our economies, it will have to be off the back of the new reality of net zero emissions. We have to make sure that we can decarbonise our economy and take advantage of the industries that will grow from that. Some members opposite spoke about the opportunities that will come from hydrogen, both blue and green, into the future. That is one of the reasons we have a minister specifically titled and responsible for developing our hydrogen industry.

Mr V.A. Catania: Only in title, nothing of substance, or you wouldn't have lost this major hydrogen deal for Western Australia.

Mr R.H. COOK: I thought it was extraordinary that the member for North West Central spoke about the Carpenter government in such disparaging terms, given that he was a member of that government and, one assumes, supported it.

Mr V.A. Catania: Yes, and left straightaway—left to the right.

Mr R.H. COOK: No, the member did not. I remember there was a period when we were in opposition and the member was in our caucus. I was fresh to the caucus at that stage. When I came in, I thought we were working together as a team. I could not understand how just about every decision, deliberation and debate in our caucus managed to find its way into the media. It was immensely frustrating that there were clearly elements within our caucus that were seeking to undermine by virtue of underhanded, distrustful activities and going to the media. It was extraordinary that just after the member for North West Central left our ranks, not a word got into the media from there on. It was a unified party room; everyone trusted each other and everyone was confident that the issues we discussed never came out.

Point of Order

Dr D.J. HONEY: Members are not to make personal reflections on the character of other members in this place, as the minister is clearly doing. He is clearly making an egregious personal accusation. The other side will not tolerate that from this side and the minister would know that.

Mr S.A. Millman interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms R.S. Stephens): Member for Mount Lawley! I give the call to the Deputy Premier.

Debate Resumed

Mr R.H. COOK: The member for Cottesloe is drawing the link between leaks from the Labor caucus back in 2008 and 2009 and the member for North West Central leaving it. I will leave that for the member for Cottesloe to analyse, and thank him for providing more colour and interest to that particular issue.

I was grateful to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum, who reminded us that the final words of the member for North West Central's inaugural speech to this place were that Western Australia does not need royalties for regions.

I am thankful for the commentary from the member for Cottesloe when he discussed the role of green hydrogen, the importance of decarbonising our economy and the role it will play in making sure that we get to net zero emissions. I assume that the member for Cottesloe sought permission from the Nationals WA to make those comments, because we know that the National Party does not move; in fact, it is riddled with absolute policy paralysis, because our friends in the National Party refuse to accept that climate change is real. I cannot work out why the member for North West Central would come into this place and spout the importance of green hydrogen when his party does not believe in climate change.

Point of Order

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade is mocking the Nationals WA's policy of net zero emissions by 2050. That is WA policy, minister. Do not come here and mislead this house that the National Party does not have a policy on net zero emissions.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms R.S. Stephens): Member for North West Central, there is no point of order. I just remind the opposition, you have your —

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for North West Central! You have had your time.

Debate Resumed

Mr R.H. COOK: That was quite the time, too, Acting Speaker. As members are aware, we have strong ambitions for green hydrogen in this state, as we need to embrace energy transition, which is the reason we have a range of funds in place to support the diversification of our economy. They include the \$100 million investment attraction and new industries fund, which is an important way in which we can leverage our private investment to make sure that we can continue to realise the opportunities going forward, and the \$50 million industrial land development fund. We have funding of \$105 million to build a state-of-the-art film studio in Fremantle. We are establishing the WA jobs task force and funding international students post the COVID-19 pandemic. In manufacturing, we have a \$15 million local manufacturing and investment fund and \$2 million to support the global advanced manufacturing hub. We are building railcars and, once again, bringing heavy train manufacturing back to Western Australia after it was killed by the Court government. We have \$90 million for green steel research. In renewables, we have an investment of \$350 million to significantly expand the softwood plantation estates. We heard bizarre contributions from the members for Moore and Roe on stopping the further desecration of our native forests, which are our most important carbon sinks.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for North West Central!

Mr R.H. COOK: It was extraordinary that there was a critique of our \$50 million transition fund to make sure that those in the timber industry can continue to maintain their jobs and their industry and see great opportunities in softwoods. Of course, the only people who undermined the softwood industry were those opposite. We have \$8 million to support the development of a wind turbine manufacturing industry, and, of course, we introduced the container deposit scheme, which is doing more to make sure that we can protect the environment. We are doing more and more each week and each month to make sure that we continue to diversify our economy. We have the opportunity of a lifetime—an opportunity that is generational in how we move forward in our post-COVID-19 experience. It is an opportunity we have to take and it is an opportunity we are taking by making sure that we look at the growth of industries such as space—Western Australia’s first satellite was recently launched—and tourism, and making sure that we can bring interstate and international tourists back to Western Australia in a post-COVID-19 environment. Thank God for the McGowan government so that they will have old-growth forests to visit when they come to this state.

I want to talk briefly about the efforts that we have gone to to generate jobs in the regions. I was recently in Kalgoorlie to attend one of the communication forums, which are about making sure that local firms have the opportunity to benefit from the \$30 billion contracts that the government leads each year. From both the Western Australian Jobs Act and the local capability fund, which assists local businesses to increase their capability and competitiveness, we have seen over 100 000 jobs leveraged from the government spend into the regions of Western Australia to make sure that local businesses can get those contracts. I had the great experience of going to the communications forum, at which we were able to see local businesses engaging with government public servants about the opportunities that were coming up and therefore the opportunities that they will have to pitch for those jobs. We are seeing opportunities in manufacturing, hydrogen, tourism, science, life sciences and mining equipment, technology and services right across our economy, and we have the funds in place to make sure that we can continue to invest in those and to encourage people to invest in their businesses so that they can continue to grow the jobs that come with them.

There is so much more we could discuss, but, in the limited time we have available, I am very keen to hear from other members, so I will conclude my remarks. I will just say that what we have heard from the opposition today is just a rehash of old speeches related to other completely different debates. No speaker addressed the issue of the diversification of our economy. We can tell that the opposition has no ideas. All members opposite do is criticise the government’s efforts to manage COVID-19, criticise our efforts to grow our economy despite the constraints around workforce and international borders that come with that, and take the opportunity to try to divide the community through their negative commentary, while at all times overlooking the fact that there are great opportunities in both regional and metropolitan Western Australia for people to get jobs. That is the reason we now have the lowest unemployment rates in the country.

MS J.L. HANNS (Collie–Preston) [6.27 pm]: I rise in staunch opposition to this motion tonight. I must say, to begin with, I was not sure I had put my hand up to speak to the right private members’ business motion, because I am here to talk about the opportunities for economic diversification and growth in critical industries. Obviously, I could talk for about 23 hours about the opportunities that this McGowan Labor government has created for these critical sectors. I am going to use Collie as a case study in this particular example. Certainly, going forward, one of the most critical sectors into our future will be that of energy. As members know, Collie’s past has been a focus on coal mining and power stations. Governments right around the world are moving their focuses onto lower carbon intensive industries and away from fossil fuels, and Collie is captured in that challenge and change.

As we know, the change in the energy sector has been caused in part by a massive uptake in rooftop solar. In response to this, the government was prompted to make, and in fact was very proactive about making, that decision to transition away from coal and fossil fuels to renewable energy. It did so in a way that was supportive of the Collie community, because it is well aware of the implications for that community. I can say that this McGowan Labor government is absolutely committed to a just transition for my community and for the community in the broader South West

Region. I have outlined previously—I will not go back through all this—the just transition process for Collie and the south west. Suffice to say that it involves, as I have said, government; it involves unions; it involves, very importantly, the employers who employ the workers who will be affected by these changes; and, really importantly, it involves the community in this conversation about what our future looks like.

Support from the McGowan Labor government was committed at the previous election, in 2017, to the tune of \$80 million for the Collie industry attraction fund and Collie Futures development fund, with an additional \$20 million in this budget. This shows that the McGowan Labor government is committed to providing support for workers, the community and the broader south west region. That stands in very stark contrast—I will use the term “thought bubble” because it has been used by the opposition tonight—to the opposition’s thought bubble around its plan for Collie. The Liberal Party’s plan for Collie included the shutdown of power stations by 2025, effectively scrapping overnight my community and many within the south west. The member for Cottesloe stood at a press conference in Perth eight months ago behind the former Leader of the Opposition, Zak Kirkup, announcing the end of Collie. I stood, in stark contrast, with the former member for Collie–Preston, Hon Mick Murray, with hundreds of workers and local business owners, calling out the opposition on its reckless energy policy.

I want to talk a little bit about what this government has done around the Collie Futures program and the Collie industry attraction strategy that has been implemented. Tourism was certainly a unique and probably, five years ago, a surprising industry when we were talking about Collie, given that our track record was in mining and power stations. Tourism and the initiatives that this government has introduced have been wildly successful, so much so that I would like to highlight a particular problem that I am very pleased to have: I no longer can find a parking space in the main street when I am trying to go to the bakery. I also cannot believe the number of people who have visited our region. Our tourist numbers have doubled since this time last year.

Mr S.A. Millman: Infiltrate, infiltrate!

Ms J.L. HANNS: They can happily infiltrate Collie!

I would also like to highlight that many of those people drive into our community with mountain bikes on the backs of their cars. One of the strategies that this government has implemented includes a \$10 million investment in world-class mountain biking trails. Again, I could go on. I will talk about Hon Mick Murray’s favourite project, which is Lake Kepwari. It took 20 years of hard work to get it over the line, again supported by this government around diversifying our economy.

On industry, there are lots of things I could discuss, but I would like to draw our attention in this chamber to a document that has been released and I am very proud to have been part of its release last week, *Welcome to Collie: Your investment destination*. It is a prospectus that sells Collie to the world and the eastern states. It is absolutely a showcase of what my region has to offer.

The foreword was put together by the Premier. I would like to highlight a couple of comments he made —

As the Western Australian and global economies move to minimise greenhouse gas emissions, the Collie region’s transition is attracting investment from the private sector and government, presenting a significant and unique opportunity for business investment.

He goes on to talk about —

The Western Australian Government has invested significantly in the region and formed an alliance —

That is the one I spoke about earlier —

with industry, community and workers’ unions to encourage ... a Just Transition for Collie.

I would also like to point out the fact that there are some very good reasons why people would invest in this region, in Collie in particular. Again, the government has done some incredible work around that. Projects are already happening in my region. I highlight that we have a very supportive political and business environment for the future of these industries. We have a very agile and highly skilled workforce within Collie and the south west region, which bodes very well for looking into these opportunities for economic diversification.

I would like to outline a couple of future clean energy projects. One project that this government is looking at and has supported through the Collie industry attraction fund is an allocation to International Graphite. International Graphite is a company that was given \$2 million through the Collie industry attraction fund. It is the first graphite processing plant to be built in Collie. The idea is that this project will be phased in over a number of stages. The foundation stage is expected to build 40 full-time jobs within the Collie region, which is a fantastic step towards diversifying our economy. In case members are not aware, the plant will see the manufacture of graphite products for new technologies including mobile phones, computers, high-pressure sealants and fire-retardant building materials. It is also going to be used to process graphite to produce anode material for lithium-ion batteries. It is part of that very critical chain of the emerging battery industry in Western Australia.

I would also like to talk about a couple of other opportunities around economic diversification within this prospectus, one being manufacturing. We have fire truck manufacturing occurring within Collie. Frontline Fire and Rescue

Equipment was given a grant under the Collie industry attraction fund. It is set up in Perth and has a satellite facility in Collie. The idea is that it will build fire trucks in the regions and within Collie. Collicrete is another project I would love to highlight. If I had more time, I would go into much more detail. The other focus areas are around primary industries. Protected cropping is one example and Cannaponics is another fabulous example of opportunities within primary industries to produce medicinal-grade cannabis.

As I said, I could go on and on, but, essentially, I would like to highlight this prospectus. It outlines very clearly the commitment of the McGowan Labor government around economic diversification into critical industries that will support jobs and growth into the future, not just for Collie, but for Western Australia. If that is not economic diversification in these sectors, I suggest that I go back to school. Given that I have spent a good part of 40 years at school, I think I stand in good stead to be able to say that if I could amend this motion, I would say that this house should celebrate and promote the opportunities for economic diversification and for growth in critical sectors and, therefore, secure the long-term future of Western Australia.

MRS L.M. O'MALLEY (Bicton) [6.37 pm]: It gives me great pleasure to speak against this nonsense motion and to challenge the confused and contradictory contributions of the members opposite. Unlike those members, I will speak to the actual motion. In doing so, I am also very pleased to have the opportunity to place on the record just some of the many ways in which the McGowan Labor government has delivered and is continuing to deliver on a diversified Western Australian economy. I am really confused about why the motion is before us because, quite frankly, it is a gift for us government members to highlight the many ways in which this government is contributing to the diversification of our economy. So, I thank the opposition for bringing forward the motion.

A commitment we made on first coming to government in 2017—one that we are progressing, despite a global pandemic and those who would oppose such action to address it—was to the diversification of our economy. The McGowan government's commitment to the diversification of our economy through investment in initiatives, which I and my colleagues have gone into in some detail—as will the member to follow me—refutes the frankly ridiculous claims of members opposite. Before I do that, I would like to share some personal reflections on the contributions of members opposite as they relate to the pressures of finding people to fill vacant positions across all sectors and the need to both keep our workforce safe and expand our workforce. I am quite confused and curious about whether members opposite support vaccination and whether they support the hard border, or a border arrangement of any kind staying in place until we get to a safe level of community vaccination. It seems that, from some of the contributions of members earlier, they are not making a clear statement about it. It is very confusing. On one hand, they talk about the need to not mandate vaccination of the workforce, but, on the other hand, they are saying we do not have enough workers in the state so we need to somehow get in more workers. Opposition members really seem at odds with their own position on vaccination. That is a real concern for the people of this state and it reflects very clearly why this government was elected in March 2021 with such a massive majority. The Liberal and National Parties have not been clear about their position and policies, if they actually have any policies. I am still confused about whether they have any policies and I know that I am not the only one confused by their position on these matters. Pandemics require decisive action and leadership. I know that I speak on behalf of my constituency of Bicton and a massive majority of Western Australians when I say thank you to Premier Mark McGowan and the cabinet ministers for showing real leadership and making the hard decisions to keep our state safe and thriving during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

The McGowan government is investing in new industries, such as battery technology, life sciences, film and others, and in the expansion of existing industries, such as tourism, and Indigenous economic opportunities to support active involvement with Aboriginal communities and business to ensure that Aboriginal people and their businesses are part of emerging and existing industries.

The future of sustainable energy production and the green jobs that will be, and already have been, created is wonderfully illustrative of the McGowan government's commitment to the ongoing economic diversification of this state. We in WA are blessed with an abundance of sun, wind and minerals and capturing those energy production pathways through new battery production will be game changing. The government is supporting this technology with the release of its Future Battery Industry Strategy, a \$13.2 million incentive program to make cathode active materials, and \$6 million to support the Future Battery Industries Cooperative Research Centre, which is further evidence of our action for a cleaner, greener future for WA.

In the time I have left, I will focus on the \$6 million of funding to the Future Battery Industries Cooperative Research Centre. The FBICRC is enabling the growth of battery industries to power Australia's future from here in Western Australia. It brings together industry, researchers, governments and the community to ensure that WA plays a leading role in the global battery revolution. It is an independent centre at which industry, government and researchers come together to create the tools, technologies and skills to grow the role of battery storage in Australia's electricity grids and make Australia a larger player in global battery value chains. As I said, the centre is a Western Australian-based company, supported by this government. The reason that I highlight this company in particular is that partnership and collaboration with private industry is a hallmark feature of this government. We are very, very aware that private industry cannot do everything in isolation, nor can government, and that is why we come together on these important initiatives and fund these important growing economies. Obviously, we are growing our economy and, in so doing, we are growing Western Australian jobs.

It is clear that the McGowan government is diversifying the state economy and it is doing this whilst also acknowledging and supporting the incredibly important role of the resource sector now and into the future. Through energy, climate action, tourism, culture and small business, the Western Australian economy is set to be even more diverse and thriving, an economy that is both green and securing the safe and expanded employment of Western Australian workers into the future.

I would like to highlight a couple of key areas because they are important to people in my electorate of Bicton, and that tells me in no uncertain terms that a green future is the future they want. The government's energy policy and the climate action it is taking include the green jobs plan, which will deliver significant green jobs as part of the WA recovery plan and help to boost the state's economic recovery from COVID-19. The green jobs plan is an investment of \$60.3 million in conservation and environment projects across the state. The plan will create more than 1 000 conservation jobs to improve native vegetation and conservation outcomes whilst further positioning the state for economic recovery over the next three years.

There are many initiatives, but I just do not have the time to talk about them all because I want to let my colleague the member for Mount Lawley get to his feet to have his say. I will try to encapsulate the important key points, one of which is our green schools policy—a policy that I am particularly excited about—which was announced by Minister Ellery. Many schools in the electorate of Bicton have already installed rooftop solar panels. Schools in Palmyra, Melville, Bicton and East Fremantle have installed solar panels, either through this initiative or as a result of election commitments I made prior to the 2017 and 2021 state elections. Solar panels make such a difference to our schools at a direct level; indeed, in some cases they are running cost positive and not just cost neutral. That is a really exciting initiative.

We have already heard about native forest logging, which is another really important initiative for my constituents of Bicton. We recently made the historical move to decisively protect our native forests. We are not just stopping something; we are also helping something to grow—pardon the pun!—with our investment in the transition into softwoods and supporting that growth. I did it again; I am so good at this!

Mr S.A. Millman: You're on a roll!

Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY: Yes. I will branch out a bit!

That is such an exciting and important step for the future of our state. It will ensure that there are sustainable jobs into the future, which is incredibly important.

Tourism and culture is another important area. The government is investing \$105 million to build a state-of-the-art production studio in the neighbouring electorate of Fremantle. The film studio will be accompanied by a \$20 million screen production attraction fund to attract job-creating productions to Western Australia. The film studio will be situated at Victoria Quay in Fremantle and will include purpose-built sound-resistant stages, and other onsite facilities such as offices, construction space and parking. It will breathe life back into Fremantle and, as I and many of my constituents say, greater Fremantle, which expands to Bicton and beyond.

I will finish on a topic that is very close to my heart as a family business owner, although my husband obviously does all the work! Recently this year, the Premier, and the Minister for Small Business, Minister Whitby, announced a new small business boost. The policy will provide \$3 000 small business lockdown grants to support the WA businesses most impacted by the recent circuit-breaker four-day lockdowns and interim restrictions. The state government committed \$41.5 million for the new grants, which are open to businesses that have an Australia-wide payroll. Members can look at the policy for further details. The important point is that this government understands the importance of partnership with the private sector, and that is the private sector big and small, from the largest corporations throughout the resource sector down to the small hairdressing salons and cafes in Bicton. It goes without saying, but I will say it again: I absolutely oppose this ridiculous and nonsensical motion.

MR S.A. MILLMAN (Mount Lawley — Parliamentary Secretary) [6.49 pm]: I rise to make a contribution in the time that remains on this debate. I noted just how enthusiastically the members for Collie–Preston and Bicton jumped to their feet to make contributions on the ways in which the McGowan Labor government is diversifying the economy. The Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade and my colleagues the members for Collie–Preston and Bicton all highlighted a point that I will make as well: that we on this side of the chamber are speaking to the substance of this motion.

When this motion landed on the notice paper, I looked forward to a discussion and debate about renewable energy, international education, agriculture and agribusiness, hydrogen, future batteries, new markets, medical technology, research, space technology, and defence—any of these things—but by the time we got to the end of opposition members' contributions, we heard the member for North West Central complaining about voting systems. Opposition members were so short on material that they could not even speak to the substance of the motion.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: I was here the whole time, member, and, when I was not here, I was standing in the hallway having a cup of tea, watching the member's lamentable contribution on the screen!

Not satisfied with the loss of their identity at the last state election, opposition members present their speeches as though they are the parties of small business, farmers or miners. They are not the parties of the miners; they are the parties of the underminers! All they do is come in here and undermine! The member for Moore comes in here, quotes conservative commentators and undermines our vaccination efforts and our health response. All the member for Vasse does is undermine our professional health workforce, which is delivering a world-class health system.

The member for Cottesloe talks down our brilliant plans for hydrogen. We have a Minister for Hydrogen Industry, we have a plan for hydrogen, and we wanted to talk about it. We wanted to have a debate. The member for Cottesloe points to one project and says that is it. Does the member know what? He lauds the effort of the New South Wales government in attracting hydrogen investment with its \$3 billion contribution. Let me tell members this: the Western Australian government is focusing on fiscal responsibility. We have a budget surplus this year and we are paying down debt. The New South Wales state government's deficit this year is \$9 billion and will rise to \$120 billion.

Then we have the underminer for North West Central talking down our police and talking down our tourism sector. The government is saying, "We can't wait to welcome more tourists into Western Australia. We want to see tourists visiting all of the wonderful offerings we have in Collie, Fremantle, the south west, the north west, the Kimberley and all over our great state. We want to see as many tourists as possible." Then we heard the Freudian slip from the member for North West Central. Do members know what he calls tourists? He calls them infiltrators! That discloses to everyone exactly what he thinks about tourists and reveals his true nature. We on this side of the chamber are in favour of tourism, and we see tourism as being an important part of diversifying our economy, even though members on the opposition benches do not agree with us.

We have to feel sorry for them; part of me feels sorry for them. I know that I should not, because I have listened to their contributions, but I think to myself "Their philosophy is redundant. Their arguments are incoherent." COVID-19 is one of the greatest existential challenges the global community and society has ever faced, and it is really putting the acid test on different ideologies. In the same way that World War I was the end of imperialism and World War II was the end of fascism, COVID-19 has called into question the hyper-individualism and neoliberalism of the conservative parties. The philosophical, societal and community response to COVID that has been succeeding is ours—one built on fairness, equality and community, and the conservatives stand condemned. When the people of Western Australia went to the polls in the March 2021 state election, they chose the things that WA Labor stands for. The opposition is left in a situation in which it does not know what it stands for. Just as the Deputy Premier said, members opposite came in here with a parade of complaints but no unifying theme. We do not know what they stand for; on one hand, they want more money spent, but on the other, they say we are spending too much.

I will tell members what we stand for: we stand for the best interests of Western Australia. We stand for critical sectors of the economy. When I am here representing the people of the electorate of Mount Lawley, the critical sectors of the economy include things like health, education and training, community safety, management of finances, building infrastructure, tourism, and the creative industries that both the member for Bicton and the Minister for Culture and the Arts spoke about during question time today. What an incredible investment—\$105 million for a new studio in Fremantle to unleash the creativity of Western Australia's talented artists.

I also think of the return of railcar manufacturing in Bellevue and the manufacturing of fire appliances down in Collie. It is incredible that the opposition had the temerity to bring this motion to this chamber today to talk about investing in new industries, because today marks four years to the day that Holden stopped manufacturing cars in Australia. It is four years to the day since the federal National and Liberal parties destroyed a fantastic sovereign industry after Joe Hockey dared it to walk out of the country, and it did. Yet the state Liberal and National Parties come in here and have the temerity to say, "We know how to invest." I was flabbergasted when I saw the motion on the notice paper. I thought, "How's the audacity? How's the arrogance? Just unbelievable." Then I thought to myself, "What do they stand for? Who do they represent?"

When I was growing up, I always thought that the old Country Party, now National Party, represented farmers; today I saw this article by Keane Bourke in ABC online news: "WA farmers push back against Nationals' lack of climate commitment", and I thought, "The National Party has lost its way." It is really sad to see. One would think that regional people are entitled to representation, but the article states —

A group of Western Australian farmers have become champions for Australia's path to net zero emissions, saying urgent action is needed.

It appears increasingly likely Prime Minister Scott Morrison will commit Australia to reaching net zero emissions by 2050 at the COP26 Climate Summit in Glasgow.

I will pause there to say that I am sure the commonwealth government must have dislocated something after its radical backflip on climate change. Eight and a half years of inaction, and now all of a sudden, with an election in the offing, it has done an incredible backflip; or rather, it is hoping to, if it is not held to ransom by the National Party.

The article continues —

But he has so far failed to secure the support of the Nationals, after a marathon party room meeting on Sunday failed to bring them onboard.

Corrigin farmer Simon Wallwork is the chair of Ag Zero 2030, a group of farmers concerned about climate change who are trying to help lead the industry's response to it.

He is frustrated by the way the federal National party has approached the issue.

“The Nationals supposedly represent farmers, but if they represented farmers then they'd be well on top of this issue some time ago,” he said.

Here is a hint, conservative parties: take your lead from the people you are supposed to represent. Go and speak to them, go and see what their issues are, and then you might get some idea about what is important and what you should be bringing before this chamber. Then you can pick up the phone and call people like David Littleproud, Keith Pitt and all the others in the National Party room who are holding this up and say to them, “We are getting crucified in WA. Our base is abandoning us.” Then all you will be left with will be your rabid anti-vaxxers and other assorted nut jobs. The article continues —

But Mr Morrison on Sunday confirmed he would not be updating Australia's target of a 26 per cent reduction over the next eight years.

...

Over the 18 years Mr Wallwork and his wife have been farming, they have noticed a significant change in the climate around their 3,700-hectare property —

I will skip ahead because I want to get to one of my key points, and that is the effect of markets. I miss having Institute of Public Affairs stalwarts like Hon Mike Nahan and Colin Barnett in here, advancing a neoliberal agenda, because at least we knew what they stood for. If the opposition is concerned about the effect of markets, it should look at what Mr Wallwork states in this article —

“We're getting indications or signals from our key markets that they want agriculture to be doing its bit and that means supplying carbon-neutral produced products,” Mr Wallwork said.

“Our banks are indicating that sustainability, in terms of how we operate our business, will become increasingly important in the flow of finance and pricing of finance to run our businesses.

“That's a worldwide sort of movement.”

He was also concerned farmers could eventually be affected by a European Union carbon levy, which is expected to see the profits of businesses exporting commodities like aluminium plummet when it comes into effect later this decade.

“Initially that seems to include things like steel, but ultimately could include agriculture exports as well,” Mr Wallwork said.

The EU —

This is critical because I heard the member for Roe talk about free trade agreements —

has also indicated that a free trade deal with Australia is unlikely to be signed until Australia does more to reduce its emissions.

Please, please, please, National Party, do what you can to persuade your federal counterparts that they are on the losing side on this issue. They are on the wrong side of history.

Then I thought about what else was going on in Parliament today. I thought about the Liberal Party of old—the Liberal Party that used to triumph and champion the ideas of the rule of law and law and order. I listened to Hon Peter Collier in the upper house undermining our meth action plan and criticising our frontline police. I thought to myself, “This is an outrageous slur.” Some members might have been in the chamber yesterday when I was speaking about the rise of right-wing extremists. I congratulate the Western Australia Police Force for the arrests made today for the racist and anti-Semitic graffiti and posters that were distributed through the northern beachside suburbs. Our WA police are doing an incredible job and they should not be undermined by the likes of Hon Peter Collier who criticised them for tackling meth. The Liberal Party of old would have been on our side on these issues of law and order. It would have been with us on community safety. But, instead, the Liberal Party is undermining us once again.

Then I think about what happened with the federal former Attorney General, Christian Porter, in the commonwealth Parliament today. It is incredible. It is unprecedented. The Speaker of the House of Representatives said that there is a prima facie case to refer Christian Porter to the Standing Committee of Privileges and Members' Interests for his \$1 million blind trust. Every time an issue like this has arisen in the past, this happens. The federal Speaker made a representation to the chamber and the federal government refused to refer him.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

House adjourned at 7.00 pm

