



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2021

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 26 October 2021

Legislative Assembly

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

CLEO SMITH

Statement by Minister for Police

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Police) [2.03 pm]: I rise regarding the disappearance of four-year-old Cleo Grace Smith and the police investigation working tirelessly to locate her and return her to her family. I know I speak for all members in saying that our thoughts are with Cleo's family at this unbelievably difficult time and in hoping for Cleo's safe return.

On Friday, 15 October, Cleo's family travelled to the Blowholes campground, on the Gascoyne coast, approximately 70 kilometres north of Carnarvon, to go camping. The family set up camp that evening. At about 1.30 am on Saturday, young Cleo woke her mother requesting a glass of water. Cleo's mother got her a drink, and went back to sleep. Later that morning, at about six, her mother realised that Cleo was not in the tent, along with her sleeping bag. After first searching the area, Cleo's mother notified police, initiating a large-scale search.

The Western Australia Police Force, supported by members of the State Emergency Service, the Army and the local community, undertook an extensive land and sea search of the area. Sadly, Cleo was not located, with police considering her disappearance to be suspicious and that she may have been abducted from the camp site. Police Taskforce Rodia, headed by Detective Superintendent Rod Wilde, has been formed and information from the public is critical to the task force's work. Every necessary police resource is being directed to find Cleo and the government has assured Western Australia police that they have full access to the resources needed to find Cleo. Police have been collecting CCTV footage and seeking to speak with everyone who was in the area on Friday or Saturday, calling for anyone with dash cam vision to hand it in. Last Thursday, I joined the Premier, Deputy Commissioner Col Blanch and Superintendent Wilde to announce that the state government is offering a \$1 million reward for information leading to the location and return of Cleo, or to the arrest and conviction of anyone involved in her disappearance. I urge anyone who may have information that could assist police to contact Crime Stoppers or police. Information can be provided anonymously. Members, this is every Western Australian parent's worst nightmare. I know we all stand with Cleo's family and our police in hoping for her safe return.

VISITORS — ST SIMON PETER CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL AND PRIMARY EXTENSION AND CHALLENGE STUDENTS

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.05 pm]: Members, I want to welcome quite a few people to the Speaker's gallery this afternoon. It is our privilege to have you here. Particularly, can I acknowledge, on behalf of the member for Joondalup, the St Simon Peter Catholic Primary School from Ocean Reef. On behalf of the member for Wanneroo, I acknowledge the PEAC—primary extension and challenge—students; welcome to Parliament House. I also understand we have a former principal of Frederick Irwin Anglican School as a guest of the member for Scarborough. I believe that is his former principal. The member for Balcatta has some guests as well. Welcome to all those people. Thanks for your forbearance, Minister for Community Services.

CHILDREN'S WEEK

Statement by Minister for Community Services

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Community Services) [2.06 pm]: I rise to inform the house that this week is Children's Week 2021. On Sunday, I had the pleasure of attending the family fun day at Whiteman Park to officially launch Children's Week. This week is dedicated to celebrating children and recognises the rights of the child as proclaimed by the United Nations in 1954. Meerilinga has been the proud convener of Children's Week in Western Australia since 1985, the first year it was celebrated in Australia. This year's theme, "Create, play, connect", focuses on strengthening children's sense of belonging and connecting with family, community and country. Meerilinga has a long history of putting children's needs first and raising the status of children in Western Australia, and the Department of Communities is a proud sponsor of Children's Week.

This week is an important campaign that champions the right for all children to be able to enjoy a full, happy and safe childhood. The event on Sunday saw cuddly animals, nature play and lots of opportunities for parents and children to access educational resources, and it was an opportunity for me to road-test my jokes for kids. Although I may have some work to do on my children stand-up comedy skills, I commend Meerilinga and the entire team for their ongoing commitment to Western Australia's kids and parents. I would like to pay special tribute to Fairy Queen Caroline at Meerilinga who has been an MC at the event for some 15 years, and who really gives the event wings. There

are countless events running this week for Children's Week and I encourage members to get involved. When we invest in children, we invest in our future, and I am proud to be part of a government that continues to put the welfare and wellbeing of children first.

GUIDE DOGS WA

Statement by Minister for Local Government

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Local Government) [2.08 pm]: In the lead-up to the state government election, the McGowan government committed to provide \$5 million in funding to Guide Dogs WA to set up a world-class guide and assistance dog breeding program. I was pleased to attend VisAbility Western Australia with the Premier and the member for Victoria Park to deliver this funding. As the body of evidence grows for the benefits of assistance dogs, the funding will allow Guide Dogs WA to meet growing demand. Guide Dogs WA provides not just seeing eye dogs but also specialised autism assistance dogs and therapy dogs, dementia dogs and dogs that assist people with post-traumatic stress disorder. The funding will enable Guide Dogs WA to establish a number of breeding locations across the state and will cover the fit-out of breeding centres, specialised staffing costs, an increase in the number of fit-for-purpose vehicles, and specialised whelping and puppy equipment.

One of the most important aspects that the funding will enable is the re-establishment of the Guide Dogs WA cadet program. This program will increase the number of local, highly qualified dog trainers who will be critical in training the increased number of assistance dogs from the program. We will also be able to reduce the need to source guide dogs and assistance dogs from interstate and overseas by sourcing locally, whilst also creating local jobs in the process. The \$5 million commitment will be matched by Guide Dogs WA, which will fund its contribution through bequests and donations. I urge all those who can to donate to this worthwhile program. Guide dogs and assistance dogs make life-changing differences for people with low vision, disabilities and other illnesses, and I was proud to be able to stand next to the Premier and deliver on this important election commitment.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

CORONAVIRUS — INTERSTATE BORDER RESTRICTIONS

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

Before I ask my first question, I would like to offer my condolences to family, friends and colleagues of Russell Woolf, who sadly passed away overnight. "Rusty" would have been well known to many of us in this chamber. He was a kind, generous and larger-than-life individual. He was a fantastic broadcaster and fixture in our lives for many years. I, like many others, will miss his irreverence, his music and his zest for life. He was a very special bloke and he will be missed by many.

Members: Hear, hear!

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I refer to the release today of South Australia's plan out of COVID-19, in addition to the plans that have been released by the New South Wales, Victorian, Queensland and Tasmanian governments. As the only state now without a plan for its post-COVID future, when can Western Australians expect to see the government's plan?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

Can I, firstly, indicate that our thoughts and regards go to the family of Russell Woolf. His death overnight was a shock to all of us. He was well known across Western Australia and loved by many people. He was a great raconteur; a very funny person. Also, he was very, very knowledgeable, especially about Western Australia, the resources industry and business. He wrapped that in a great sense of humour and a great sense of fun and positivity, which I think is what is needed on radio. He was just a great fellow. But, most importantly, he was a husband and father, and I know that his family will be hurting; we all feel for them. I am sure all members of Parliament and all Western Australians pass on their regards to the family of Russell Woolf.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr M. McGOWAN: I have just a couple of points to make. Firstly, South Australia, as part of its plan, is maintaining social restrictions—they will be in place over the Christmas period and Christmas holidays. What that means is that a whole range of restaurants, functions, events, cafes, family events and Christmas events will have restrictions on the number of people who can attend and whether people can stand up at the events, and that people will have to wear masks at a whole range of these events. That will impact on families and their celebration of Christmas and also impact on businesses over the Christmas period.

We have consulted the small business community extensively on these matters. What we find in the tourism and hospitality sector is that a whole range of them rely upon the Christmas period and Christmas holidays for a large part of their income throughout the year—for some of them, up to 40 per cent of their income is generated over that period. Putting in place restrictions and the possibility of lockdowns, if cases come in, over the Christmas period is not something that we want to do. I understand Tasmania, Queensland and South Australia rely very heavily upon the tourism trade out of Sydney and Melbourne; therefore, we can understand why, in their situation, they are doing what they are doing. But in the Western Australian context, the idea that we damage our tourism industry

and damage our hospitality industry and, basically, spoil Christmas for families across the state, is not something that we want to do at that point in time whilst we are getting our vaccination levels up. As I have said, when we get between 80 and 90 per cent vaccination rates, we will be able to detail exactly when we will open to New South Wales and Victoria. We are climbing in our vaccination rate each and every day. The main thing we should all be doing—all members of Parliament should be doing—is encouraging people to get vaccinated. That is the biggest contribution that can be made. We should not have members of mainstream political parties trying to stop people getting vaccinated, as we are seeing in Western Australia today. I urge the Liberal and National Parties to get their members on board to make sure they help to get Western Australians vaccinated, because to do otherwise is dangerous to the health of Western Australians.

CORONAVIRUS — INTERSTATE BORDER RESTRICTIONS

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

I have a supplementary question. Thank you, Premier. With calls from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA, Business Council of Australia and now Master Builders Association for a clear road map for WA to rejoin the nation and to end lockdowns and travel restrictions, why can the Premier not share the details of a plan that reflects the conditions that we have here in WA, whatever that date may be for reopening?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I have just explained to the Leader of the Opposition everything that is happening, but I will explain it again. When we get a vaccination rate of between 80 and 90 per cent, we can provide a defined date. If we provide a date now, it might move because of the vaccination levels or because of what happens in the eastern states because of an outbreak over there. Look at what is happening in Britain today—mass outbreaks; lots of people are dying. We are trying to avoid that. I have gone through this for two years, with all these demands all the time from everyone: “Do this! Do that! Do this!” We are going to do what is right for the health and welfare of Western Australians. We are not going to be pushed and pulled in whatever direction depending upon the whim of some press secretary from the opposition who wakes up that morning and says, “Here’s a good question to ask.” And we are not going to be cowed by people like Nick Goiran in the Liberal Party, who are supporting the anti-vaxxers out there with their commentary. It is sick! It is irresponsible what the Liberal Party is doing; it is irresponsible to the health of Western Australians. I tell you what, the Liberal Party will not stand up to him because he runs the Liberal Party. The reason he is doing this is because it is a recruiting tool to get members into Liberal branches. That is why he is doing it. What we are saying to all members of Parliament is to be responsible, support the health advice and make sure we get people vaccinated as quickly as we can. The grossly irresponsible behaviour of Nick Goiran should be condemned by everyone, especially members of the opposition.

CORONAVIRUS — MANDATORY VACCINATION POLICY

660. Ms C.M. COLLINS to the Premier:

I refer to the state government’s efforts to get as many eligible Western Australians as possible vaccinated against COVID-19.

- (1) Can the Premier update the house on the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination program and how the government is making vaccinations more accessible for more Western Australians?
- (2) Can the Premier advise the house of any attempts to undermine this government’s efforts to get all eligible Western Australians vaccinated?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1) Thank you, member for Hillarys. About 76 per cent of eligible Western Australians aged 12 years or over have now had their first dose of vaccine. Over 58 per cent of 12-year-olds and over are now fully vaccinated. That is a terrific achievement considering we are the largest state in the world and have some of the most remote communities in the entire world, and we did not get the extra doses that New South Wales and Victoria did early on, and also we have not had the major outbreaks that they have had.

On Sunday, the Commissioner of Police, Rob Scott from Wesfarmers and I were able to open the first pop-up vaccination clinic at Bunnings. We are going to be opening, we think, at least 10 of those around Western Australia. No booking will be required. People can just arrive at Bunnings, buy their hardware, buy a sausage out the front and then get vaccinated as well. That means that people can get the job done, especially if they are time-poor like many tradies are. We are confident that this new initiative will help to drive vaccination rates up around the state.

We have also opened a new clinic at Carramar Village Shopping Centre in the northern suburbs—another opportunity for people in the north to get vaccinated. That will provide 2 000 vaccinations initially, but we expect that will increase. Additional clinics will open in Mandurah, Ellenbrook and Canning Vale in early November. Community clinics are now open at Armadale Central Shopping Centre, The Square Mirrabooka, Centrepoint Midland, Claremont Showgrounds, Kwinana Supa Centre, the Perth Convention

and Exhibition Centre, and Lakeside Joondalup Shopping Centre. There are more than 100 locations across Western Australia and regional communities whereby people can get a vaccine, or they can go to their general practitioner, pharmacy, Aboriginal medical service and GP respiratory clinics, which are managed by the commonwealth, to get vaccinated.

(2) I have said what I had to say about Mr Goiran a moment ago. What he is doing is reckless, dangerous —
The SPEAKER: Premier, I need you to call him “the honourable”.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I have said what I had to say about Hon Nick Goiran a moment ago. What he is doing is reckless, dangerous and irresponsible. When you are questioning the health advice, you are undermining the COVID vaccination rollout, and you are giving credibility to the anti-vaxxers. All I say to the Liberal Party is this person is your shadow Attorney General, and what you should be doing, Leader of the Liberal Party, if you had any guts whatsoever, is sacking him.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cottesloe, your interjections are disorderly.

CORONAVIRUS — VACCINATIONS — TARGET

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

I refer to the minister’s comments reported over the weekend by the ABC’s Kenith Png —

... “announcements” about the government’s plan to open up the state will be made before Western Australia reaches the crucial milestone of having 80 per cent of its population aged 16 and over fully vaccinated.

- (1) Could the minister clarify his comments? Are we working towards 80 per cent vaccination, including those aged 12 and over, or 16 and over?
- (2) Who is your government consulting in the formulation of the aforementioned plan?

Dr A.D. Buti: Definitely not Nick Goiran!

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

It is certainly not Hon Nick Goiran!

(1)–(2) What we were discussing on the weekend was the opening of the new vaccination clinic at the Armadale shopping centre. It was great to be there. We had Tony Galati and Alicia—I did not catch her second name—from the Wirrpanda Foundation as part of the Aboriginal family day activities. I was joined by the member for Darling Range, the member for Armadale, and the member for Jandakot, celebrating another great initiative by the McGowan government to continue to extend the opportunities for people to be vaccinated.

Obviously, what the media were curious about was: when are we going to be making further announcements? Of course, the answer to that question is: we are making announcements all the time. We are making announcements on vaccinations; we are making announcements on the health workforce; and we are making announcements on more opportunities to be vaccinated. We will continue to do that right throughout the process.

CORONAVIRUS — VACCINATIONS — TARGET

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

Minister, you did not actually answer the question. I have a supplementary question. Would it not be better to link all these announcements into a cohesive plan so that everyone in Western Australia understands what you are working towards and we can get people rolling up to get vaccinated, sooner rather than later?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Answer from the Minister for Health, please.

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

We all know that the mission here is to live with COVID, and that is why we are undertaking an extensive process of making sure we work with all interests in the community, particularly our employer and employee groups, making sure we listen to the science, not to Hon Nick Goiran, and making sure that we take the opportunity to consult widely with the community on what is the best way that we step forward. What we do know is that the Western Australian community have done an outstanding job in protecting themselves and each other by observing all the things that we need to make sure that we do to get through the global pandemic. Of course, what everyone in Western Australia—not everyone, but what everyone in Western Australia knows is that the mission at the moment is about getting vaccinated. Of course, we are all appalled by the behaviour of those who would seek to threaten both leaders in the community and their families who are promoting vaccination and the importance of making sure that we can all get vaccinated because we know that it is effective, safe and that it is what will keep each other safe.

You wonder about why these people continue to persist with this activity, this insidious dangerous activity. I saw it this morning—intimidating members of Parliament as they came in today. That is because, in the world of social media, there are people who are encouraging them—people who are encouraging them day to day. It is not necessarily in their words. It is often coded language like, “You don’t need to tell someone if you are vaccinated or not. You don’t need to listen to the science. Why should you be compelled to get yourself vaccinated.?” We know where this code is coming from. This code is coming from those opposite.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr R.H. COOK: Hon Nick Goiran is the one who is giving succour and encouragement to these people who are threatening leaders in the community, including the Premier and his family.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.H. COOK: He is the one—he and others who you listen to.

Dr D.J. Honey How disgraceful!

Mr R.H. COOK: We know the language, member!

The SPEAKER: If you pause for a moment, minister. Member for Cottesloe, your consistent and repetitive interjections are inciting everyone else to interject. Can I ask you for you to —

Dr D.J. Honey: It started before me!

The SPEAKER: Would you like to be the first person to be asked to leave? No? If you would not, you will not answer back to the Speaker, thank you; and perhaps reflect on your behaviour during question time today. Minister.

Mr R.H. COOK: We have people who are threatening the lives of politicians, namely, the Premier; threatening his family, threatening the schools that his family go to. Who are these people and who is encouraging them? We know who is encouraging them, and that is those who use that language. It is not the words, member for Cottesloe; it is the coded language. It is the coded language that says —

Withdrawal of Remark

Dr D.J. HONEY: I have a point of order.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: The point of order will be heard in silence.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Madam Speaker, the minister —

Mr M. McGowan: Moron! You’re a first-rate idiot.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Pardon!

Mr M. McGowan: You are.

The SPEAKER: Premier, I have said that the point of order will be heard in silence. I hope that it is a point of order. For the information of all members, I will rule on the point of order, not anyone else, and I require no advice from any of you.

Dr D.J. HONEY: The Premier audibly across the chamber just called me a moron. I ask that he withdraw it, and I have a second point of order in relation to the Minister for Health and the comments he made.

The SPEAKER: That was subsequent to standing to make a point of order. I would like to hear the point of order that you were going to make in the first place.

Dr D.J. HONEY: My point of order, Madam Speaker, is that the Minister for Health is impugning the character of a member in the other place—directly impugning the character of a member in the other place. It is malicious and false.

The SPEAKER: There is a clear ruling on that. There is no point of order on that. On the other point of order that you raised, I ask that the Premier withdraw that.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I withdraw.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr R.H. COOK: It is not the words; it is the language. It is the communication. We know what is happening here. I am not impugning Hon Nick Goiran’s character. I am impugning his behaviour and the signals that he is sending to these people that it is okay to prosecute these lies. It is okay to prosecute this anger. It is okay to prosecute and threaten those who encourage that people get vaccinated and stay safe.

There is a call that needs to be made, member for Cottesloe, and it is not a call to order; it is a call to you! You are the Leader of the Liberal Party. This is a test for you.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Mr R.H. COOK: This is a test for you, member for Cottesloe. As the Leader of the Liberal Party, you have a very single and important chore—that is, pull your man in line or accept that he is actually the leader of your party and resign.

HOSPITALS — MATERNITY BYPASSES

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

I refer to the concerning revelations that there have been more than 60 maternity bypasses recorded at Perth hospitals over three months amid an ongoing chronic shortage of midwives.

- (1) Why has the minister not prioritised the recruitment of midwives and prevented the completely unacceptable level of maternity bypasses?
- (2) What urgent measures are being implemented to address capacity issues amid the expected baby boom over the next few months?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for the question. It is important for members to realise that in the last 12 months of the Liberal–National government’s time in government, the number of midwives in Western Australia in service decreased by 5.3 per cent. In the time that we have been in government, we have increased the number of midwives by over 100. The member pointed to the issue around bypasses and, yes, it is always preferable that someone who is delivering their baby in the public system will be able to deliver that baby in the hospital in which they choose and preferably with the midwife who has been caring for them throughout their pregnancy, but it is not always the case. It is not always possible, but it is preferable. We understand that.

I think it is important to understand the context here. For instance, between June and August 2016, the number of bypasses under the Liberal–National government was 38 in south metropolitan hospitals alone. This is coming from the party that in government closed down Kaleeya maternity hospital and also for a period threatened to shut the maternity services at Bentley Hospital, notwithstanding the strong campaign put on by members of the community and the Labor opposition at the time to stop that. We have seen a significant increase in the number of people having their children delivered in the public system. There has been a 12.4 per cent increase since 2015–16, so there has been a sharp increase in the number of women seeking to deliver their babies in the public hospital system. That of itself is a vote of confidence. We have also seen a significant drop in the number of women accessing private health insurance for the delivery of their babies, particularly during this COVID period. That, of course, is another vote of confidence.

The way that we respond to these sorts of demands for services is to increase supply, and we are doing that through a significant recruitment campaign. As I said, 100 extra midwives have been employed in our services since we came to government, with another 15 since January this year. What people would also be looking for from a government is for it to make long-term plans to make sure that we secure the quality and safety of maternity services in Western Australia into the future. They would probably look to indicators such as \$1.8 billion for a new women’s and newborns’ hospital to be developed at the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre campus.

I will be lectured to by a lot of people, but preferably not the Australian Medical Association, which got its line wrong this morning and, quite frankly, was just spreading mistruths, certainly not the Liberal Party under which in its last 12 months in government we saw a reduction in the number of midwives working in the hospital system, and certainly not from those opposite who closed maternity services or sought to close maternity services and under whose watch there was a much higher number of maternity bypasses in south metropolitan hospitals.

HOSPITALS — MATERNITY BYPASSES

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

I have a supplementary question. Given that there were 40 fewer midwives at the beginning of this financial year than the last and an additional 400 babies are expected to be born at King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women alone in 2021–22, what reassurance can these expectant mothers have that they will not be bypassed from hospital to hospital as a new standard measure of care?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

As I said, they would look to the record and they would see that in a lot of circumstances, the number of bypasses for maternity services has reduced, not increased, under the Labor government. They would also look to the recruitment of nurses that is going on. There are almost 1 000 new nurses in our hospital system as a result of our recruitment campaign from January to September this year. We have seen an extra 15 midwives as part of that cohort and an

extra 42 nurse graduate places to specialise in midwifery as part of our GradConnect program. What we can see is a significant increase in the activity to not only recruit nurses, but also continue to bring through those young nurses specialising in midwifery.

We have significant shortages and constraints in workforce in our health system at the moment. We are experiencing that right across the nation, because for some bizarre, historical reasons we have sought to recruit doctors and nurses from overseas to bolster our training programs rather than have a home-grown version of our healthcare workforce. With the international border shut because of the commonwealth government's decision, we have a much more constrained healthcare workforce, but, as members can see, we are working proactively to recruit more people to our health system. That program is working very well. Many members would have already seen the launch of our media campaign over the weekend, so we are making great progress. I think the government and the healthcare workers who back us up are doing a great job.

HEALTH — WORKFORCE — RECRUITMENT

665. Mr Y. MUBARAKAI to the Minister for Health:

Although the minister has already addressed some of the questions regarding his portfolio, I am still going to ask my question. I refer to the McGowan Labor government's significant investment in our health system, including the \$1.9 billion of additional funding outlined in the recent state budget.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how this investment is helping address the workforce shortages arising from COVID-19?
- (2) Can the minister update the house on the work underway to grow WA's health workforce?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) I would like to thank the member for his question. It gives me another opportunity to talk about health services—an area that I know the member cares about deeply. In particular, as I said in my last answer, the health workforce supply across the nation is significantly constrained. Western Australia is no orphan in the struggle to make sure that we continue to attract healthcare workers, which is why a \$2 million advertising campaign began over the weekend to help recruit more health workforce professionals to the WA system. It will support the workforce recruitment campaign that is already underway. We are focused on ensuring that Western Australia is competitive and that the world's best and brightest know that we want them here and want to come here and work within our great health system.

The Belong campaign features a range of healthcare workers in various facilities and settings to capture WA Health's multidisciplinary, collaborative and dynamic working environment. The campaign advertisement was shot in our hospitals, utilising actual healthcare workers and featuring them working in that environment. Importantly, it features, as I said, real staff in real hospitals and showcases the incredible work they do every day. This new phase of Western Australia's recruitment campaign will run across multiple platforms, including television, radio, outdoor, digital and print. It will run interstate and overseas. The overseas advertising is complemented by shots of the great lifestyle that people can enjoy in Western Australia, and hopefully those living in the miserable weather of England, Ireland and Scotland will take the opportunity to come and practise their craft in WA. The campaign is part of a commitment to invest in a multipronged workforce attraction and retention strategy, which is part of the \$1.9 billion funding package that we announced in the 2021 budget.

Part of this investment includes \$71.6 million to employ more doctors, nurses and midwives across the WA health system to address the workforce shortages arising from COVID-19. Western Australia's current recruitment drive has already seen almost 1 000 new nurses and midwives join the WA health system since January this year. The campaign also includes a dedicated refresher program to support enrolled nurses, registered nurses and midwives with registration requiring recency of practice to return to the workforce and a commitment to employ 1 100 graduate nurses in 2021 and 1 200 graduate nurses in 2022.

The government is committed to making sure that our world-class health system has some of the very best doctors and nurses working within it and that they have the colleagues standing by them to support them to continue to make a great healthcare workforce. I am very proud of the work we have done and the progress we have made to date. The Belong campaign will take us a long way forward to boost that work and its effectiveness.

HOMELESSNESS — ACCOMMODATION

666. Dr K. STRATTON to the Minister for Community Services:

I refer to the McGowan government's ongoing commitment to supporting people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, homelessness in our communities. Can the minister update the house on the future of the accommodation facility located at 100 Hampton Road in Fremantle and outline how it continues to support those who may be sleeping rough in our community?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I would like to thank the member for her interest in this area and all the members in this chamber who are interested in supporting some of the most vulnerable in our community. As a government, we are spending record amounts on supporting people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Our stewardship of a challenging facility at 100 Hampton Road—it is just at the end of the street where I live, so I know the facility in Fremantle well—has been a good example of that. This is not a facility that has been built for the purpose of housing vulnerable people, but it has been used for that purpose for a number of years and to good end until recently by Foundation Housing. Since 2009, Foundation Housing has been managing that facility.

I was pleased to attend 100 Hampton Road this morning with my colleague the Minister for Housing to announce that St Patrick's Community Support Centre in Fremantle will be taking over the management of that facility at the end of this year. We are very grateful for the work Foundation Housing has done to date and for the expertise and credibility in working with homeless people and people at risk of homelessness that St Pat's has. Along with the five-year lease that St Pat's is undertaking in 100 Hampton Road, there will be an upgrade to some of the facility. Some additional maintenance will be completed on the property in the next few months, so I think we will see some improvements to the physical facility at that location. When we were there this morning, the Minister for Housing, John Carey, and I met Brett, one of the residents, who was doing work on his veggie garden. It was good to talk to him and to be walked through his work. He said that doing his work in the common garden facility gives him a reason to get out of bed in the morning. It looked like he was doing a fantastic job. Thanks to Brett, Foundation Housing and the staff and volunteers at St Pat's who do good work in the community.

PERTH CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL — AISHWARYA ASWATH

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

I refer to the minister's media announcement on 25 May stating that it would take 10 weeks for an inquiry to report back on the tragic death of Aishwarya Aswath.

- (1) Given it has now been more than 20 weeks, when will we see the inquiry's report into the tragic death of Aishwarya Aswath so that her family can get the answers they are desperately waiting for?
- (2) Is this yet another example of the minister failing to deliver on his promises?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) The answer to the question is no. The fact of the matter is that we have been severely impacted by COVID-19 because it is important that when we do these inquiries, we have experts from outside the jurisdiction so that they can come in and provide an independent view of the circumstances and the situation that they are inquiring into. It is a very careful process. As I have said in this place before, it is not one that I am prepared to put any artificial deadlines on. The advice I received at the time—I think the member mentioned 25 May—was that there was an expectation that it would take around 25 weeks. However, the inquiry has been significantly hampered by the fact that the travel arrangements we anticipated to be undertaken by the inquirers were, obviously, severely curtailed.

I can say that the inquiry is in its final stages of completion and that we have had significant contact with the family to make sure that they understand the delays. My understanding is that they are comfortable with those delays and they understand the reasons for them. We want to make sure that we work closely with them and, in particular, make sure that they have access to the inquiry's findings before we make them public and they have the opportunity to discuss the findings with the inquirers. I will not rush this process. It is one that we are stepping through very carefully, making sure that we provide an absolutely comprehensive analysis of the situation, that everyone is provided due process and that everyone feels heard. From that perspective, I will wait for it to conclude and when it is delivered to me, we will be able to make that report public.

PERTH CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL — AISHWARYA ASWATH

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

I have a supplementary question. I understand that the border arrangements were addressed through Zoom. Given it has been six months since the tragedy, can the minister confirm that this report will be tabled in Parliament before the end of the parliamentary year?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

Yes, I can confirm that, member. It does not matter what the communication means. What matters is the process and that people feel that they have been given due process. There are limitations to how we can do that in a virtual context. Nevertheless, I know the inquirers have done a thorough job. I am informed that the inquiry has been very competently managed, so from that perspective, I will wait for the inquirers to deliver their recommendations or their findings, and we will deal with those accordingly.

STATE ECONOMY — DIVERSIFICATION

669. Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE to the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to diversifying the Western Australian economy and encouraging new green industries to the state.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how the government is supporting the establishment of Woodside's hydrogen and ammonia production facility in Kwinana?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house what this project will mean for local jobs and the local economy?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) I would like to thank the member for Cockburn for the question. We thought perhaps it was important that the member for Cockburn had an opportunity to exercise his interests in the interests of his constituents on this matter because we suspect those on the other side will be a bit quieter on hydrogen this week—not quite as keen to ask about it—because it is a very important issue.

I was very pleased to be in the heart of Western Australia—of Kwinana!—with the Premier. He wanted to remind me that we were awfully close to Rockingham. I assured him we were still in Kwinana—a wind-assisted spit from Cockburn, member for Cockburn, but not quite! I was with the Premier, the Minister for Hydrogen Industry and the Minister for Lands to announce that Western Australia will host one of the world's largest hydrogen and ammonia production facilities. The project from Woodside, dubbed H2Perth, includes over \$1 billion in capital expenditure and is supported by the state government through the leasing of designated project-ready industrial land in the Kwinana and Rockingham strategic areas. H2Perth has been developed to supply low-cost hydrogen to the domestic markets and has been planned in direct alignment with the initiatives of the government of Western Australia, such as the state's renewable hydrogen strategy, the complex and detailed work around turning the western trade coast into a concerted industrial hub and WA's road map for diversification, *Diversify WA*.

The project will support approximately 2 000 jobs during construction and over 200 jobs once the project is completed. The early stages of the project will see a retail outlet there so that people who are starting to transition early to hydrogen-fuelled vehicles will have the opportunity to take early advantage of this facility. This project is one of dozens of active and renewable energy proposals here in the state and we have committed \$90 million to the sector. We are excited to work constructively with Woodside and, indeed, many of the other companies and proponents in Western Australia to build our clean green energy future for WA.

As Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade, I am constantly meeting with members of industry who assure me that what they are looking for is not big handouts but concerted policy leadership and that is what they are getting from the WA state government. They appreciate the support that they are being given. Indeed, the CEO of Woodside, Meg O'Neill, in today's *The West Australian* said, and I quote —

The State Government has already recognised the benefits of establishing Western Australia as a global leader in hydrogen and is working with Woodside to help make H2Perth possible.

Under the McGowan government, we will not be simply shovelling dollars out to entice companies to come here. We want them to understand the strategic importance of locating their businesses, industrial hubs and headquarters in Western Australia because Western Australia is the future of the nation's economy, particularly when it comes to energy transition. Member for Cockburn, there will be hundreds and thousands of jobs and constituents like yours will benefit from the economic leadership that the McGowan government is providing. We look forward to more projects such as H2Perth in the very near future.

NURSES AND MIDWIVES — RECRUITMENT

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

I refer to the minister's media statement on 14 April announcing that he will be undertaking an international recruitment campaign for nurses and midwives.

- (1) Why has the United Kingdom's advertising campaign only just commenced, as reported on Seven news?
- (2) If it takes so long to get marketing creatives made, as the minister has asserted, why did he not start work on this campaign when a life-threatening workforce shortage was first identified?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) I want people to understand that the recruitment campaign was already underway. That is why we have seen over 150 doctors come from the United Kingdom and Ireland already. We have seen many more nurses come from the UK and Ireland already. As a result of our budget, we allocated \$2 million to make sure that we could provide the right sort of campaign necessary to boost those efforts and significantly increase the number of doctors and nurses who are attracted to Western Australia.

The Leader of the Liberal Party would not be familiar with budgetary processes. We saw the contempt that the Liberal Party showed for the state's finances when it was in government. I understand why there is an element of confusion when it comes to issues such as costings, finances, budgetary approvals and making sure that there is proper oversight of the process.

Mr M. McGowan: Adding up.

Mr R.H. COOK: And adding up, as the Premier has just interjected. I understand that that is a level of confusion and a dark grey area for the Liberal Party. It has a bit of a knowledge gap. From that perspective, it does not appreciate what goes on to make sure that we have these effective policies.

The reason we have proceeded carefully is that we are already in the field. We wanted to make sure that the creatives were right and that they would resonate with the people whom we are targeting. As I said in previous answers today, we have already seen just under 1 000 nurses, but over 1 000 nurses, assistants in nursing and midwives come to be part of our healthcare workforce. As I said, over 150 doctors have come from Ireland and the UK since January this year. So, we are making good progress. Obviously, the Belong campaign is an important part of that recruitment. That will now significantly increase and ramp up. We will continue to recruit as part of our \$71.6 million healthcare workforce support package to make sure that we can continue to provide world-class health care.

NURSES AND MIDWIVES — RECRUITMENT

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

I have a supplementary question. Can the minister confirm that there are doctors and nurses who are fully vaccinated but are yet unable to enter WA from within the rest of Australia?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I hear rumours about this all the time. Every time someone comes to me and says that there are doctors and nurses who cannot get in, I ask who they are. If the member tells me who they are, we will make sure that they get here.

Dr D.J. Honey: I'll send you the details.

Mr R.H. COOK: Send me the details, by all means, because the WA government is open for business.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.H. COOK: The member will have to ask Hon Nick Goiran for permission! Of course, he will say, "They're double vaccinated; we don't want them here."

We are continuing to recruit from the east coast, inside Western Australia and internationally. As I said, we have 150 doctors from the UK and Ireland and we are bringing nurses back as part of our Grampian nursing and midwifery program. Those nurse graduates left Western Australia to get their practical skills in the NHS Grampian when we had an oversupply. We now have an undersupply, so we are bringing them back as well. About two dozen of them will hopefully be joining us soon. Any doctors and nurses who want to come to Western Australia, particularly from other states in Australia, can do so. Often we do not have their full documentation, so the police cannot give them the clearances they need. But, in working with the Chief Health Officer, I can assure any doctor or nurse who is registered, particularly if they are double vaccinated, and wants to come and work in Western Australia that we will move heaven and earth to make sure that they can come in.

SHARKS — HAZARD MITIGATION

672. Ms R.S. STEPHENS to the Minister for Fisheries:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's comprehensive shark hazard mitigation program. Can the minister please update the house on the automation of the shark warning system and outline how this will help support the government's commitment to keeping WA beachgoers safe?

Mr D.T. PUNCH replied:

I thank the member for the question. It is an excellent question. I am very pleased to inform the house of yet another addition to the McGowan Labor government's comprehensive shark hazard management strategy, which is the automation of parts of our shark warning system in the lead-up to summer. Eight automated towers will be installed at Twilight, West and Kelp Beds beaches along the Esperance coast, at Bunker Bay near Dunsborough and at Cowaramup Bay and Lefthanders surf break there will be two each. Another two automated towers are being installed by the Town of Cottesloe after being refurbished by the department following the SMART drum line trial, which are the first warning towers to be installed in the Perth metropolitan area. I am very pleased to install this new infrastructure for the people of Esperance, who asked for this specifically when I met with them recently.

This investment represents yet another enhancement of the government's comprehensive shark hazard mitigation strategy. I am very proud of the \$17 million world-leading strategy, which is based firmly on science and research. These new measures complement our recently allocated \$12 million for Surf Life Saving WA to deliver beach and aerial patrols to 2025, which secures the service into the future. I also remind the house of our recent \$5 million

funding boost to shark hazard mitigation initiatives, including extension of the popular \$200 rebate for personal deterrent devices, grant funding for local governments to install and replace beach enclosures, and \$2.8 million for dedicated funding for opportunistic shark tagging and extending the range of the receivers to 800 metres.

Like so many areas of public debate lately, the difference between the government's and the opposition's positions could not be more stark. I noted with interest the comments of the shadow Minister for Fisheries, Hon Colin de Grussa, following the recent infamous alleged shark-riding incident off the Pilbara coast. I condemn the actions of that individual in the strongest possible terms; it was reckless and idiotic behaviour that endangered the safety of crew and passengers and needlessly engaged emergency services personnel. But I was shocked to hear that Hon Colin de Grussa's response was to call for more drum lines along the Pilbara coast. More drum lines, he said!

Ms A. Sanderson: They don't believe in science.

Mr D.T. PUNCH: He certainly does not. It is as if the actions of one idiotic individual would trigger the expenditure of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money without any reference to science or evidence. I quote Hon Colin de Grussa on ABC Pilbara radio —

... I think there is a role for government in this space that's for sure and I think earlier ... or last year and the year before the Government trialled drum lines ...

Clearly, he is well briefed on it! I am not sure that he has read the Chief Scientist's report. He continues —

I think drum lines should be trialled at as many places as possible ...

He certainly has not read the reports. The interview goes on. It makes for very interesting reading, if any members want to read it. At the bottom, he encapsulates the whole strategy of members opposite —

I guess the other thing of course is ... whether we use the shark deterrent devices, now I'm not sure how effective they are, I would suggest though that it's not a bad idea to be using something that may help ...

Clearly, a lot of strategy and thinking has gone into that! Once again, members, as with so many public policy issues, even the ones we have heard today, we are reminded that there is one party in this place that trusts science and formulates policy in a methodical and logical way based on evidence to keep Western Australians safe and there is an alternative, which is the members opposite.

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

HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE — MIDWEST

673. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Health:

I refer to reports of health services' worker shortages across the state, particularly in the midwest area.

- (1) Does the minister consider it good practice to make junior nursing staff work in emergency departments unsupervised?
- (2) Can the minister confirm whether Geraldton Health Campus is currently 40 full-time employees short?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)-(2) No, I cannot confirm that Geraldton Health Campus is short 40 nurses. I can confirm that we have a highly constrained nursing and midwifery workforce right across the system. Traditionally, for regrettable reasons, when we have a shortage of nurses and midwives in the metropolitan area, that situation tends to be compounded in regional and remote areas as well. I did see the article in which the Australian Nursing Federation made these allegations; I am seeking to establish them. But I would just say that the great opportunity provided by working in a rural or regional setting for a lot of young medical professionals is that they get to practise at scope; that is, they do get to take on opportunities and responsibilities that perhaps would not be provided to someone in a larger metropolitan hospital. From my time as a younger man, I went to work in Geraldton because of the opportunities that were there. I concur with the member for Geraldton that it is a great place to live and there are some great opportunities for young people who want to extend themselves professionally and take the opportunities offered. I encourage all nurses and doctors who are looking for opportunities to practise in the largest health jurisdiction in the world, to get one of the most unique career experiences anywhere in the world, to practise with the WA Country Health Service. Indeed, the director general was recruited from the United Kingdom and practised at the Port Hedland hospital for many years. It is a great experience. We will obviously make sure that any nurse graduates or nurses who are looking for opportunities to practise across this great health jurisdiction have the opportunity to practise in rural and regional health as well.

HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE — MIDWEST

674. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Health:

I have a supplementary question. If the minister cannot confirm that Geraldton Health Campus is short 40 full-time employees, can he provide the number of employees it is short at the moment, and does he consider that that poses a significant risk to the midwest region and the nursing staff involved?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

The member can put on notice any question he likes—that is the commitment I make to him! The member has the opportunity to ask that question on notice, and I will be very happy to provide that information, if he actually does so.

The SPEAKER: Members, that concludes question time.

BANKING SERVICES — REGIONS*Petition*

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe) [3.01 pm]: I have a petition couched in the following terms —

To the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament Assembled

We, the undersigned, express our concern at the number of banks choosing to reduce service operations in Western Australia, especially regional Western Australia. With Australia's banks recording higher dividends and interim profits, we oppose the continued closure and reduction in opening hours at bank branches, leaving communities with limited or no over the counter banking services.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please, members! There is too much noise in the chamber. I ask the member to continue with his petition.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The petition continues —

We therefore ask the Legislative Assembly to call on the State Minister for Commerce to proactively seek, lobby for and implement solutions to prevent further reductions in service operations in Western Australia, particularly regional Western Australia.

And your petitioners as duty bound, will ever pray.

[See petition 19.]

POLICE AMENDMENT (COMPENSATION SCHEME) BILL 2021*Appropriations*

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriations for the purposes of the bill.

PAPERS TABLED

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

RAIL CROSSINGS — SAFETY*Notice of Motion*

Ms M.J. Davies (Leader of the Opposition) gave notice that at the next sitting of the house she would move —

That this house calls upon the state government to invest in initiatives to increase rail safety at all passive rail crossings across Western Australia and ensure adequate advocacy to the federal government is being made to improve this critical issue across Australia.

NATIVE FOREST — LOGGING*Notice of Motion*

Dr D.J. Honey (Leader of the Liberal Party) gave notice that at the next sitting of the house he would move —

That this house condemns WA Labor for its short-sighted decision to unilaterally shut down the native forest industry based on a deeply flawed justification.

HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE*Matter of Public Interest*

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

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

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) [3.05 pm]: I move —

That this house condemns the Minister for Health for failing to properly secure the necessary skilled healthcare workforce to deliver a world-class health system, including his failure to recruit enough nurses as promised.

It is a worthy motion on something that members on this side of the house are certainly hearing in our communities, whether it is in metropolitan Perth or across regional Western Australia.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Ms L. METTAM: I can hear the Minister for Police's comments suggesting that in some way this motion is an attack on our health workers; it is quite the opposite. This motion is all about supporting our health workers who overwhelmingly are being asked to do more with less, with only 47 per cent feeling that they are valued in their workplace. One-third of our health workers feel comfortable or safe speaking up. Day after day, we hear from people in our health workforce who are feeling extraordinary pressure, and that is exactly what this motion points to.

This motion points to the extraordinary announcement made by the Minister for Health last week regarding the international advertising campaign to encourage workers to come to Western Australia. How extraordinary that several months after announcing the campaign in April, we hear the advertising campaign was delayed because of time spent with creatives. The fact that it has taken six months to deliver such an advertising campaign is extraordinary given that we know hospitals and health workplaces are overcrowded and understaffed, leading to issues around patient safety in an overstretched and under-resourced health system. We know that our health workers are already feeling extraordinary pressure and are being asked to do more with less. We hear across the board from staff that they are working double shifts and working overtime. It was the trigger for the grievance that I presented to this place just last week about issues raised about Wyndham Hospital, where health workers feel unsafe not only in their workplace—I talked about the fact that only one in three felt safe speaking up—but also in their accommodation. The lacklustre response to the security issues raised about nurses' accommodation is leading to an extraordinary circumstance in which we are seeing hospital services being cut back and patients in the Wyndham community being asked to travel an hour to Kununurra for hospital services. It is quite extraordinary.

Although we have an understanding and an appreciation of the lives that can and will be lost to COVID-19, it is fair to raise—we have raised it in this place—the issue of the lives that are lost when our health system is not properly resourced. The Australian Medical Association has pointed to the fact that an overcrowded emergency department can increase the mortality rate by some 10 per cent, which would lead to the loss of hundreds of lives—300 to 400 according to David Mountain, who stated that on Channel Seven recently. Given the mortality rate and what we know about emergency departments and the importance of getting patients treated in a suitable time frame, we know that this can lead to the loss of life. We know that it can also lead to issues of acuity. That is why we on this side of the house continue to raise the important issue of ambulance ramping, which has been at extraordinary levels under this government; it is five to six times greater than what was considered a horror story by our Minister for Health when he was in opposition. That is fundamentally linked to the issues that we are seeing right across the board in our health system—in our hospitals and emergency departments across our regions, which are all experiencing these issues of being understaffed.

The Department of Health's annual report pointed to the fact that there were 119 deaths due to clinical errors in our hospital system. Healthcare workers are doing an exceptional job under extenuating circumstances. They are human, and when consistently asked to do overtime and double shifts, we know that there will inevitably be mistakes. On this side of the house, we certainly do not, and did not, support the government throwing junior nurses under the bus to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency in response to the tragedy surrounding Aishwarya Aswath. We believe that our healthcare workers should be supported, and that is why we are talking to this worthy motion.

I touched on Wyndham Hospital. It usually has eight or nine nurses or health workers on the roster and it is now down to three. That is obviously having a significant impact. We know that regional WA increasingly relies on interstate and international workers. We also know that the government has been doing some good things in recruitment. We have had feedback from the Australian Nursing Federation about Perth Children's Hospital. Despite the Minister for Health stating there was not a staffing issue there, we certainly support the quick response to the recruitment that we have seen at Perth Children's Hospital. There are an additional 17 full-time equivalent emergency department nurses and another 25 FTEs were approved in August 2021. That was revealed through the estimates process. The feedback that we are getting from the nursing federation is that that is a great example of a health service provider recruiting quickly in response to an obvious need. We know of the tragedy surrounding Aishwarya Aswath. The issues that had been raised since October the year before were finally resolved, in some way, from a recruitment point of view, although we look forward to seeing what the report will state when it is finally tabled. We are hearing from other health service providers that the recruitment process is too slow across the WA Country Health Service and other health service providers. That is leading to issues of serious concern and patient safety.

In the grievance that I presented last Thursday in this house, the Minister for Health opposed the suggestion that nurses are finding it difficult to get back to Western Australia from interstate or overseas. I reject that suggestion. We have heard from many who are finding it difficult to get back to WA. Thankfully, one nurse who I assisted through the media, which is the way, in most instances, we have been successful, is now working as a nurse in Darwin because the approval process was so involved. She talks about a three-month approval process to get work here. She responded to the nursing shortage call when she was in Victoria. She had been working over there and wanted to return home to work here. She is in the extraordinary circumstance of having to work in Darwin while still applying for work in the WA health system.

Just today, there were stories on the radio and in news articles about the midwife shortage we are seeing across the state. That has led to the extraordinary circumstance in which mothers no longer feel comfortable that they will be able to give birth at their hospital of choice. A nurse wrote to me stating that she trained as a nurse at Edith Cowan

University in Churchlands. She has over 15 or 16 years' experience working in intensive care units and has three years' experience working as a clinical specialist in palliative care. For the past two years she has been working in the field of medical devices. The email goes on. She has been in the United Kingdom and is trying to come home. She has been appealing, through the Minister for Health's office, to take advantage of the \$5 000 relocation costs and the benefits associated with being employed in the WA health system, but she has been frustrated with the process all along the way. With her support, I will forward this email to the minister following the matter of public interest. It states —

At present, I am applying for Medical Assistant and Floristry Assistant positions, as —

She is —

desperate for work (I haven't worked since 17th August). I've applied to a nursing agency also today, and hoping they may be able to get me some support worker shifts in the meantime.

For all the red tape that needs to be gotten through to get my nursing registration again, I am not surprised why so many choose not to go back into the profession. I was on the Temporary COVID Register in the UK during the pandemic, and the bureaucratic nonsense that I went through to get a job —

Here —

... is mind blowing.

I do hope you are able to get some answers from ... the Government regarding my concerns.

That came in just today on the back of the issues that have been raised.

Of course, the other big challenge in recruiting and attracting staff is the government's own appalling record when it comes to how our health workforce feel. I have already pointed to the statistics around that. The most recent study in the Your Voice in Health survey stated that fewer than half of the respondents felt that their contributions were valued. What is also damning is that across the spectrum these figure highlight that workplace satisfaction in our health sector is one of the worst performing in the nation, with almost half the responses to the survey providing feedback that is below the national public benchmark. What a damning statistic that is. What a damning situation we are in at this point in time. Across the board in the health system our health workforce is calling out for more support at a time when there is no COVID in the community, elective surgery has been put on hold and there are record levels of ambulance ramping in response to a respiratory virus. It raises a question about what urgency this government has put around measures to ensure that our hospitals are best prepared as they can be for a COVID-19 outbreak. It raises the question of why it has taken six months to deliver an advertising campaign, given our health system is on its knees. This is not just about supporting our health workforce who, more than ever, feel undervalued and unsafe about speaking up. This is about patient safety, given we know that there has been a number of clinical errors and that there will be hundreds of deaths, with emergency departments that cannot ensure that those patients go to a ward and are not treated as quickly as possible. I leave my comments there.

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Opposition) [3.20 pm]: I rise to join in condemning the Minister for Health for failing to properly secure the necessary skilled healthcare workforce to deliver a system that Western Australians deserve. The motion moved by the shadow Minister for Health is very important. How damning it is to hear that people are responding to the calls of this government to come to Western Australia and they cannot get through the red tape or bureaucracy to work in our hospitals that are so understaffed and resourced. How damning; it is a disgrace, minister. I am very happy to rise to support the shadow minister's health motion and it is very timely, because we need to bust the myth that our hospital and health system is okay. That is what the Minister for Health consistently stands and tells everyone: that our health system is COVID-ready and that we are prepared. What absolute rubbish! It is broken and it has broken on the Labor Party's watch because over a number of years it has failed to invest to keep pace with the investment required to now manage what we will see as a serious crisis when COVID arrives on our doorstep. The minister is making an almighty mess of our health system when we most need it to be operating at full capacity.

The question we have to ask is: what is at the heart of every health system? It is certainly not the bricks and mortar, although it is very important to have appropriate facilities for our health workforce to work in and for our population to go to as it builds confidence in the health system. But the people we rely on to deliver these services are at the heart of every health system. They are under extraordinary pressure. They are under-resourced and starved of leadership, with a government that is desperate to paint over the cracks and problems to convince the public that everything is okay. Do members know what would get people to roll up and get vaccinated? Admitting that our health system is broken and that people could do their bit by getting vaccinated so that we do not overwhelm an already broken hospital and health system. That would motivate people to turn up and get vaccinated. Admitting that our health system is broken and that it will disintegrate if COVID arrives in Western Australia before our vaccination rates are high enough to protect the community is a truism. That is not overstating the case; that is why there is so much haste in trying to get our population vaccinated. If COVID arrives tomorrow, our health and hospital system will not cope. Everybody who works on the frontline in those hospitals and everyone associated with the health system more broadly will tell us that. This, I think, is the real reason we have seen this very, very significant push to get people

vaccinated. It is the right thing to do; people should roll up and get their jabs. The opposition supports vaccination. We have been out there telling everyone to get vaccinated, but this government and minister should come clean and tell everybody that if they do not, they are at risk of overwhelming our health system and the best thing they can do is get vaccinated for their health and their family.

The Minister for Health has this Disney scenario of our health system; is it like the Disney version on repeat: “We’re all okay, it’s fine!” He has dismissed the concerns of the opposition, the Australian Medical Association, the Australian Nursing Federation, media reports, patients, St John Ambulance and all the health service providers, and persisted with “everything is fine and okay; we are under pressure, but everyone else is, so it’s okay”. That is his version of events. Unfortunately, it could not be further from the truth. I would like to focus on the WA Country Health Service in particular and explain why the opposition can level such serious accusations at the Minister for Health.

Let us start with the doctors. We have heard feedback from the health workforce more broadly through the government-run survey. The AMA runs its own survey, and through its *Medicus* newsletter of September 2021 it published its response from 600 doctors working in the public health system. It published those results in its biannual morale and engagement survey. I understand that it is a union, and so it has an agenda to try to ensure that it has appropriate supports for its workforce and members—we are not blind to that fact—but 600 doctors across the public health system provided feedback. The responses about the WA Country Health Service were damning. This is a direct quote —

Compared to the other reported health service providers ... in WA Health, WACHS consistently had the highest negative ratings for many of the 2021 Morale Engagement Survey questions and significantly, the poorest ratings for senior doctor morale.

...

The AMA (WA) has previously highlighted sinking morale at Bunbury Regional Hospital ... and ... results show little improvement in some of the key problem areas.

Results from other WACHS site are also cause for concern and warrant remedial action, with a majority of practitioners believing raising clinical concerns will impact their future employment ...

That goes to the same feedback that came through the government’s own survey, that people are too scared to raise their own concerns. Why would anyone want to work in an environment like that? How will we recruit more people to come and assist us with our enormous task, when we have some of the lowest morale of doctors and nurses? Every single clinician working in these hospitals is providing feedback saying that they are too scared to raise these concerns and they are working in an environment where the morale and culture is either rated as poor or very poor. In the case of Bunbury Regional Hospital, 89 per cent of senior doctors reported morale as being poor or very poor and 84 per cent rated culture as poor or very poor. That is an indictment on the leadership of the hospital and the minister. That is the conclusion of the analysis of the AMA at the end of those results. Again, I quote directly from the newsletter —

While the HSP Boards play a significant role in this process, the Minister for Health, the Minister for Mental Health and ... (the Director General of Health) all bear ultimate responsibility. The fault lines run deep, yet reach to the very top.

I want to read to the minister some the comments collected by the AMA by senior practitioners, directly from the people who are an integral part of our health system that the minister says is prepared, safe and working well. They are not attributed to individuals, it did not do that, but they are published in *Medicus* and can be tabled in Parliament if required. They were collected as part of the survey. The first quote states —

“The hospital is completely overwhelmed and staff are failing to engage and care—it is an impending disaster and is a result of government and health department functioning and failure. It should be front page news every day and is not—so it is also a failure of the fourth estate.”

The second one states —

“The public health system has lost all its appeal to work in.”

The third one states —

“Culture and morale are good in Anaesthesia but in nursing, it is very poor. There is chronic understaffing and I worry about the patients on the wards and my nursing colleagues’ mental health...”

The fourth one states —

“Theatres are understaffed, elective lists are pushed ahead of emergency cases despite poor staffing (rather than cancellation ... and ward nursing staff are often asked to work double shifts without any recognition of their goodwill. When extra resources are asked for in certain services, the response is the same—“there’s no money for that”—and yet you’re expected to deliver education, research, clinical care for an ever-increasing and complex patient load...”

It is remarkable that in a state as wealthy as Western Australia a response from anyone in the health system can be that there is no money for that. The fifth quote states —

“Rather than offering solutions with substantive increases in proper resources we are subjected to endless meetings to audit and study our processes, rarely leading to a positive change...”

The article in *Medicus* ends with —

Holding up the health system is a battered, weary workforce, with both anecdotal and validated reports of burnout, plummeting morale and poor culture in the public sector.

That is directly from the people who work in our public health system who are holding together this hospital system that the minister continues to tell us is operating, is fine and everything is okay. It could not be further from the truth and it is clear from the people on the frontline that everything is far from rosy. The minister is providing a desperate cover to the failures of a critical service on his watch.

I want to touch briefly on the question raised by the member for Moore during question time today and the recent reports about the necessary workforce required for Geraldton Health Campus and across the midwest. I understand that there is a shortage and, despite being aware of the issue, the minister could not provide us with figures about it. He was briefed enough to come in and provide a snarky response to the member for Moore, but not enough to say that he understood there is a shortage of staff in the hospital and the government is doing everything it can. The other challenge that the minister could explain is why Meekatharra has no permanent staff and perhaps he could clarify whether that is the case. I understand that a number of hospitals across the midwest and the Kimberley regularly rely on fly-in fly-out staff. Having no permanent staff cannot be a good outcome for either those people who are flying in to provide the service, or for the continuity of care for the community and certainly not for the bottom line. I would assume that, given the health situation we face with COVID potentially arriving on our doorstep any time, we would want money to be spent to secure staff in a permanent manner in the furthest reaches of our state. They are vulnerable communities that will not survive without support. Having no permanent staff at Meekatharra and potentially a shortage of 40 FTEs at Geraldton hospital is absolutely disgraceful. That also goes to the issues that were raised by the shadow Minister for Health last week about hospitals and health services in the Kimberley. We can add that to the issues at Bunbury Hospital, to the code yellows being called in Albany and the morale issues at Albany Health Campus.

There is absolutely a case for us to call this minister to account for his statements that the health system is COVID-ready and prepared. We are not prepared to manage even the daily business of health and patients walking daily through emergency departments. My comment is that the minister needs to do better because our state’s health and safety depend on it, and he is failing miserably.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [3.31 pm]: I rise to contribute to this excellent motion brought by the member for Vasse to condemn the Minister for Health for his failures to properly secure the necessary skilled healthcare workforce to deliver a world-class health system. Just today, anecdotally, I learnt of a situation in which a particular nurse had been called back to the hospital after already doing a 12-hour shift. I understand that the nurse was the thirty-seventh person who had been called in a desperate attempt by that organisation to find staff. That is the sort of situation we are now in. People are being called back to do another shift after doing a 12-hour shift. We have had 12-hour sitting days in this place. Members can imagine how they would feel after 12 hours—we are exhausted. Then imagine being asked to come back in again. It is bizarre.

Dr D.J. Honey: Then if you make a mistake, you get referred to the medical board.

Mr R.S. LOVE: There we are. As we heard, if there is a problem, junior staff especially, who already feel unsupported, feel that they will be thrown under the bus because they saw what happened in that unfortunate situation at Perth Children’s Hospital in which junior staff were referred to authorities because they had been put into positions that were untenable for staff to be put into.

The member for Central Wheatbelt referred to the situation in Geraldton, which was reported on extensively on ABC radio news today. I was listening to the interview with Mark Olson, the secretary of the Australian Nursing Federation here, who was talking about the dire situation in which unsupported staff are sent into emergency departments. People coming off the wards are not properly trained and are being placed in very difficult situations whereby the people who should be supervising and educating within the hospital system are too busy, on the floor of the hospital doing the work themselves, to get involved in training to make sure people have been provided for. One of the other things he said that was quite interesting regarding the COVID situation and the shortages was that, although it was already acknowledged there was a staff shortage, in the first term of the government, we saw steady underinvestment in the health system. That has led to this situation. He believes it was quite clear that there was potential for disaster in this COVID environment if we did not recruit properly, especially in places like the midwest, where Geraldton hospital not only services the City of Geraldton, but also provides support and backup for many smaller hospitals and communities that I represent around that area. The term he used for recruitment was that it was as though the authorities went on a “holiday” from COVID. Instead of getting to the point, they had been on holiday and, instead of ensuring that the shortages were being addressed, they were doing nothing of the sort.

We know that ambulance ramping, which is the canary in the coalmine, has been at absolutely extraordinary levels because there are no people in the hospital to take charge of patients to get them into beds and to look after them properly. Instead, they are being kept in car parks for thousands and thousands of hours per month. That is a classic example of a system that is broken, a system that has not been addressed. The minister has now been the Minister for Health for five years and he stands condemned for his lack of action.

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Minister for Health) [3.35 pm]: Deputy Speaker, the government will not be supporting this motion. That may, or may not, come as a surprise to members on the other side. What certainly has not come as a surprise to members on this side is the tired language being used by members opposite. They change the motion each day but not the language. Every day, we stand up here to respond to their accusations and we answer their questions, yet they simply persist in this constant undermining of public confidence in our health system and undermining of the doctors and nurses and the great people who lead them. I can understand that members opposite have to do their jobs and they have to come in. I perhaps would have given maternity services a bit of a crack today, too, if I were the member for Vasse, but, of course, I would have made sure I had covered my bases. I would have made sure that I was not part of the government that cut maternity services at Kaleeya Hospital by selling Kaleeya Hospital and trying to cut services at Bentley Hospital. I would have made sure that, in the last 12 months of the government I was part of, it had not reduced the number of midwives by 5.3 per cent. I would have made sure that I was on safe ground and not trying to accuse a government that had already increased the number of midwives by 100 in the first five years of government. Be that as it may, I understand that the Leader of the Opposition has to stand up.

I remember in 2016, there was a young couple who gave birth by the side of the road outside Northam. They were a couple from York.

Mr P. Papalia: I think only one of them gave birth!

Mr R.H. COOK: Only one of them gave birth by the side of the road because there were no maternity services at Northam hospital. Under this government, we have doubled the number of group midwifery practices, particularly in our regional areas, and today that couple would have been able to give birth at Northam hospital and not had to travel all the way to Midland. That is an example of the sort of comprehensive rebuilding of health services that have taken place under this government. Members opposite often seek to highlight the fact that this year's Your Voice in Health survey—the online anonymous health survey of all healthcare workers that was introduced by us to make sure we can continue to monitor the health, morale and wellbeing of our staff—has this year slipped back to the levels it was in 2019. I do not know whether it has escaped the attention of members opposite that something has happened between 2019 and today. There has been a global pandemic, which has put untold stress upon our hospital system and the staff who work in it. It is not surprising that they are not feeling that great at the moment. Contrary to the false accusations from the Leader of the Opposition, I am not saying that everything is hunky-dory. I am the guy who is standing up saying it is tough. People are doing it tough in our health services at the moment. Because we have an unusual peak in demand, we have significant constraints on our workforce, and we know there will be a point in time at which there will be even more pressure on our healthcare services because of the introduction of COVID-19 into the community.

We must continue to recruit staff to ensure that we have the resources we need to respond to those demands. Those opposite overlook the fact that in just this year alone we increased the number of nurses, midwives and assistant nurses by more than 1 000. They overlook the fact that we have recruited more than 150 doctors from the United Kingdom and Ireland. They overlook the fact that a recruitment campaign has been running this year that has done a really good job and has been boosted by a \$2 million multimedia campaign to recruit doctors and nurses to work in our great health system. They continue to ignore the fact that our doctors and nurses are doing an amazing job under really trying circumstances—in fact, they not only ignore it, they undermine it. They constantly come into this place and undermine the great work that is being done.

I met a young nurse by the name of Emily on the weekend as we were talking about the new Belong campaign. Emily was working in the Northern Territory, where she says there is pretty tough work at the moment. She came to Western Australia to continue her career as a nurse because she knows that we have an extraordinary health system. It is not perfect. No-one said it is perfect; no-one said it is not going through difficult times. The Leader of the Opposition invented a completely apocryphal scenario to try to argue that the government is somehow oblivious to these difficult circumstances. That is why we put in a \$1.9 billion budget injection to cope with both the demand on mental health services—with a half a billion-dollar commitment—and a specific commitment around COVID-19 to deal with the peak in demand at the moment. Of course, there is also our \$71.6 million commitment to bolster the health workforce. A significant amount of work has been done and we are meeting with some success. We will recruit more than 1 000 nurse graduates this year—do not forget that we usually recruit between 600 or 700 nurses a year. There will be more than 1 000 nurse recruits this year and another 1 200 recruits next year. We will be getting a flood of young, enthusiastic and passionate nurses who have done their studies and will be completing their training in our health service. Think about the great contribution that they will make in the future. A lot has been done to make sure that our health system deals with the current demand and continues to work to prepare for the future.

The Leader of the Opposition said that we should turn our vaccination campaign into a “do not get vaccinated because it is good science, but get vaccinated because she believes our health system cannot cope”. I take a lot of advice from people on vaccination, but I will never take advice from that mob because they do not believe in it. That is why they are happy to sit back and watch the shadow Attorney General undermine the COVID-19 vaccination campaign, through his dog whistling to anti-vaxxers to encourage them to continue their campaign.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Liberal Party!

Mr R.H. COOK: Their campaign has resulted in death threats to the Premier and his family; threats to the schools to which their children go and threats to the Premier’s office in Rockingham. There have been protests outside his house in Rockingham. Where do these anti-vaxxers get their encouragement from? They get their encouragement from the shadow Attorney General.

What is the Leader of the Opposition doing about this? What is the Leader of the Opposition doing to call in the shadow Attorney General and to say, “Stop this coded language; stop this disgusting campaign that you’re running on behalf of the opposition. Stop encouraging anti-vaxxers. Get on board.”

Ms M.J. Davies: I have told everyone that it is unacceptable to make threats.

Mr R.H. COOK: Leader of the Opposition, do you support mandatory vaccination?

Ms M.J. Davies: Absolutely.

Mr R.H. COOK: So call out the shadow Attorney General or sack him. That is what the Leader of the Opposition needs to do—sack him.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Mr R.H. COOK: That is what the Leader of the Opposition needs to do.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Liberal Party!

Mr R.H. COOK: The Leader of the Opposition needs to make a decision. Is she a leader in this community or a follower of Hon Nick Goiran and his attempts to undermine our vaccination campaign?

I accept what the member for Cottesloe said. None of the words—let us be careful about what we say here—that Hon Nick Goiran uses adds up to an anti-vaccination campaign. What Hon Nick Goiran is doing, though, is using language—a coded message to the anti-vaxxers—to encourage them to continue to undermine the efforts.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Liberal Party!

Mr R.H. COOK: There are two people in this chamber at the moment who could stop this: one is the Leader of the Opposition. It is time for her to sack Hon Nick Goiran or call him into line. The other is the Leader of the Liberal Party, who says all Liberals are good Liberals. I think the Leader of the Liberal Party has a dud in Hon Nick Goiran because he is undermining the community’s efforts to make sure that we continue to protect each other, protect our children and protect our loved ones.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Liberal Party, you had the opportunity to get up and contribute to the debate when the opposition was talking, which you chose not to do. Opposition members spoke and they were heard predominantly in silence. I would like the minister to be heard in silence as well. Thank you.

Mr R.H. COOK: I agree with the member for Cottesloe that there is a failure here. There is a failure of leadership from those opposite—from the Leader of the Opposition and her shadow Attorney General, and from the Leader of the Liberal Party for not calling in Hon Nick Goiran and saying, “Mate, what you’re doing is damaging. What you’re doing is not what Liberals stand for.” Or maybe it is. Is the Leader of the Liberal Party happy with the campaign Hon Nick Goiran is running?

Dr D.J. Honey: The Speaker has spoken.

Mr R.H. COOK: Do you support it, member for Cottesloe?

Dr D.J. Honey: Do you want me to answer, Mr Deputy Speaker?

Mr R.H. COOK: I am inviting his interjection, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: He is inviting an interjection.

Dr D.J. Honey: It is really straightforward. He agrees with exactly what we agree with—that is, that mandatory vaccination should be legal and it should be based on medical advice. That’s it.

Mr R.H. COOK: Why does the Leader of the Liberal Party; member for Cottesloe not publicly say that the language Hon Nick Goiran is using is not helpful? Why does he not say, “I do not agree with him”? Why does he not say, “We support mandatory vaccination because that’s what the Chief Health Officer has called for”?

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: This is frightfully interesting, but it is, in fact, irrelevant. The motion is about the Minister for Health’s recruitment, or otherwise, of a necessary skilled healthcare workforce and not about the actions of Hon Nick Goiran.

Mr R.H. COOK: It was actually the Leader of the Opposition who introduced the issue of vaccination into this motion. I am responding to the motion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. Please, carry on.

Debate Resumed

Mr R.H. COOK: The member for Cottesloe; Leader of the Liberal Party has an obligation—that is, to stop the rot that Hon Nick Goiran is encouraging in public confidence in the vaccination program.

Dr D.J. Honey: That is just not true.

Mr R.H. COOK: We know the language. We hear the dog whistles coming from your mob all the time. We hear it on native title. We hear it on a whole range of issues—around immigration. We hear it around a lot of things, such as the rights for women. We hear the dog whistling from you all the time—when you call women sandwich makers; when we hear your guarded language around health services for reproductive services. We hear it from you all the time when you talk about Aboriginal heritage. We hear coded language from you all the time. We heard coded language coming from Hon Nick Goiran today. We know what it means—it is a dog whistle. It is a dog whistle to those running the anti-vaxxer campaign. It is time for the member for Cottesloe to stop it. He is the Leader of the Liberal Party. He is the one who calls the shots. It is time he applied leadership and called Hon Nick Goiran into line. If he does not call him into line, the Leader of the Opposition has to sack him as the shadow Attorney General, as is her right as Leader of the Opposition. If the Leader of the Liberal Party is not prepared to do that, he is not up to the job.

My job is simple: I have to provide great world-class quality health care for the people of Western Australia. The way to do that is to make sure we have the health workers we need to provide the health services Western Australians deserve. In this time of COVID-19, we need to continue to recruit staff, which is why we have already recruited an extra 925 qualified nurses since January this year. In addition to that, we have another 84 nursing assistants, who are providing great health care in our health services. We have recruited 1 270 new graduate nurses across WA Health in 2021, with 170 graduate nurses working in our vaccination centres. In 2019, 763 graduate nurses were employed in the WA health system. We have seen a significant increase in the number of new health workers coming into our system. We reintroduced our \$2 million campaign, which will be on top of the already successful recruitment exercise that has been undertaken.

We will continue to see nurses and doctors coming back into the service. They are not listening to members opposite and the way they are trying to undermine our health service. They are voting with their feet. They are coming back into the system, or they coming into the system, and they will provide great health care for the people of Western Australia. We are very proud of the work that they do.

DR K. STRATTON (Nedlands) [3.50 pm]: I rise to not only condemn this motion, but also support our healthcare workforce. I had the privilege of working in three tertiary public Western Australian hospitals as a social worker, and some seven per cent of my electorate work in hospitals. Many more work across our health system in allied health services, GP and specialist rooms, peak bodies and primary health. Being home to three tertiary public hospitals, every day my community welcomes thousands of people who provide a variety of roles in health care, contributing to the care of patients in those hospitals and health settings. They are, in fact, part of the vibrancy of my community and why the single block on which my office is located can sustain seven coffee shops and a pub.

From my work and the community experience, and as a patient myself of King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women, and at Perth Children’s Hospital, when my daughter managed to break both of her wrists, here is what I know about our health workforce. They are highly qualified. They are highly skilled. They put their heart and their soul into their work. They are dedicated. They are committed. They administer care with their heads, their hands and their hearts. We have a highly experienced workforce as well. I know many of my social work colleagues, my allied health colleagues and my medical colleagues have dedicated not just years but decades of their lives to service to our health service. I saw this across the multidisciplinary teams that I was part of in paediatrics, maternity hospitals and tertiary mental health and emergency departments. I am talking about security staff, patient care assistants, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, dietitians, reception staff, nurses, doctors and specialists, all of whom carried out their roles in patient care with dedication, compassion and professionalism.

All of these are complex settings, with complex patient care, and I have always borne witness to a patient and their family being at the centre of that decision-making and care. Just to give a little insight into some of those complexities, when I was a social worker at King Edward, I was working with 12 and 13 year olds who were having babies, and women who had long histories in the child protection system; one woman was going to lose her tenth child to that child protection system. We dealt with significant grief and loss and significant reproductive loss. We dealt with women who were flown down from remote Aboriginal communities with nothing but the clothes on their backs to deliver a baby after a very complicated pregnancy. All this work is unseen by the private health system, and it is carried on fairly much behind closed doors by that health workforce. This is no denying, and we have not heard the minister deny, the impact of the global pandemic on our health system and its workforce. As he acknowledged earlier, we have seen not only a peak in demand but that health workforce supply has been constrained by the global pandemic and, of course, WA is no exception to that. What we have, though, is a budget commitment and a strategy to alleviate and address some of those issues.

Putting patients first and at the centre of care and decision-making is not just the focus of those who are directly carrying out patient care, but also of our health leadership, including the Minister for Health. We have a clear strategy that is backed by action and by budget commitments. We have set targets for recruitment and retention. We have a diverse array of strategies in place to recruit doctors and nurses from overseas and interstate, to facilitate nurses returning to the workforce, and a graduate nurses program, GradConnect, that has already seen us recruit a significant number of graduate nurses.

Alongside this investment in recruitment is investment in retention, with strategies to maximise permanent employment. We see a \$71.6 million budget allocation for workforce attraction and retention, including \$88 million for additional beds, nursing and administrative staff, and the Perth Children's Hospital in the seat of Nedlands. As we have heard, this is supported by a \$2 million media and communication campaign showing real healthcare workers, in real healthcare settings, and also showing those settings to be, as I know them, collaborative, dynamic workplaces that are centres of excellence in care. That investment has paid off already with the recruitment of 1 000 new nurses and midwives since January, and our hospitals have the highest number of nurses in the WA health system on record.

We have a strategy, action and investment. This is what leadership looks like. On behalf of my community of health workers, I thank the Minister for Health for his leadership and support for our healthcare workforce. Importantly, however, I acknowledge that dedication and commitment to high quality care demonstrated by our healthcare workers—rather than the constant dialogue about their inadequacies and lack of capacity, which my colleagues tell me is getting fairly relentless and impacting their morale—and instead express my deep respect for their work and contribution to our community. I express my gratitude for their contribution to the health and wellbeing of all Western Australians, both during the pandemic and beyond.

DR J. KRISHNAN (Riverton) [3.56 pm]: First of all, I have some statistics: currently, we have 15 483 full-time equivalent nurses in Western Australia. In 2016, we had 11 456 full-time equivalents. If the opposition cannot do the maths, a little over 4 000 plus nurses have been added to the health system. From January to August 2021, 925 qualified nurses were recruited by WA Health. In the most difficult time for recruitment anywhere in the world, WA Health has succeeded in recruiting 925 qualified nurses. Is this a failure of recruitment? I do not think so.

In 2021, 1 217 nurses were recruited across WA Health. The 170 graduate nurses currently working in vaccination clinics will eventually be transitioned into the mainstream healthcare system. All these stats make a clear statement. Along with the very important stat that there are two active cases in the state, with zero community transmission, can the opposition spot many other places in the world that have this situation? It is because of the strong health system. It is because of the dedication of healthcare workers, particularly the nurses, who have got up every day to care for Western Australians.

In her concluding comments, the member for Vasse said that if this continues, it will result in many deaths. Two things could be interpreted from that. The first is that it is humiliating and insulting to the current workforce to tell them that the opposition does not have confidence in them and we may have deaths with the current workforce. Secondly, the opposition is sending the wrong message to possible recruits, saying they are coming into an organisation where there will be deaths and they will be responsible for these if they join us. Is this showing responsibility by the opposition health spokesperson? She should be joining hands and encouraging people to join the healthcare system. She should be thanking the workforce who are working hard to keep Western Australians safe, not insulting and humiliating them and also causing a problem with recruiting people into the system.

I come to the comments of the Leader of the Opposition. I understand that she is a very experienced politician and well deserves to be the Leader of the Opposition. As new members, we look to her for how the opposition does things in this house. It is a key responsibility to cooperate with the government on important programs like vaccination. She is saying that, yes, she supports vaccination, but she does not stand up to someone who supports anti-vaxxers. One of her coalition partners is using coded language, or whatever terms, to very safely support anti-vaxxers. She needs to lead by example by standing up to those people and condemning them and supporting vaccination. One key achievement is that close to three-quarters of Western Australians above the age of 12 years are already vaccinated. We want nine out of 10 people at a minimum to be vaccinated. For that, we do not want distractions. We do not want

people encouraging anti-vaxxers and causing problems or hurdles. I kindly request that the Leader of the Opposition stand up to such distractions and support the government and the people of Western Australia and cooperate with the government in achieving things that are essential for the people of Western Australia.

Lastly, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said in his contribution that people are being treated in the car park, which is absolutely wrong. Ambulance ramping means that paramedics are still caring for the patient they have brought to the hospital. Ambulance ramping means that the patient can be inside the hospital having blood tests or X-rays and being cared for by the paramedic. It only means that the emergency team has not taken over their care. In my previous contribution, I said that when category 3 and category 4 patients arrive in an ambulance, there is constant ramping when they are put back in the waiting room because they are capable of sitting and caring for themselves and putting their hand up when they need help. They are constantly assessed in case there is a need to escalate them to category 2 and category 1. They are not cared for in the car park. That is wrong information. Again, that is misleading.

I thank you, Madam Acting Speaker, for the opportunity to make this short contribution. I oppose this motion very strongly. Lastly, I request that the opposition join hands on the only portfolio in which we can work together—that is, health—to make things better for, and provide better health services to, every Western Australian.

MR S.A. MILLMAN (Mount Lawley — Parliamentary Secretary) [4.01 pm]: It gives me great pleasure to rise after the fantastic contributions by people who have firsthand experience of our health system in Western Australia—the Minister for Health, the brilliant social worker in the member for Nedlands and the former general practitioner in the member for Riverton, who spoke with alacrity, sincerity and intellect. Meanwhile, this opposition is perpetrating a despicable fraud on the people of Western Australia. During its eight-and-a-half-year term in government, Royal Perth Hospital suffered years and years of neglect. There has been no more difficult birth in the Western Australian health system than the commissioning of Fiona Stanley Hospital—a completely botched job by the Liberal–National government. The last thing it did for us was to leave us a children’s hospital with lead in the water and asbestos in the ceiling. Do not believe the lies of members opposite. If they say to us that the health system was in ripping nick when they were booted out of office in 2017, it is a fraud, a lie and a deception and we will make sure that they are put straight. The trouble is that they never had the ability to put the health system straight. They never had the ability to put it right because of the shocking state in which they left our state’s finances. When this Labor government was elected in 2017, we set about doing two things—implementing the sustainable health review so that we could give our health system the firm foundation it needed to go forward and fixing the state’s finances. It is only because of that diligent, dedicated, hard work that we are in the position we are in today and we can spend \$1.9 billion on a new women’s and babies’ hospital and \$1.8 billion to improve the health system.

The utter hypocrisy of the Liberal Party is on display when it brings this motion before Parliament. A nod is as good as a wink to the anti-vaxxers. Last week in the chamber, we debated the Sentencing Legislation Amendment (Persons Linked to Terrorism) Bill. The conspiracy theorists and the anti-vaxxers got a fair run in that debate. This is what the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation had to say about them. It said that extreme right-wing groups and individuals have seized upon COVID-19, believing that it reinforces the narratives and conspiracies at the core of their ideologies and that those groups and individuals see the pandemic as proof of the failure of democracy and globalisation. ASIO also says that these groups are tapping into COVID-19 as a way of activating these groups.

We heard absolutely nothing from the member for Cottesloe during this debate. Not only is he providing no support to the member for Vasse, but also he is demonstrating that the modern Liberal Party is opposed to science, academic endeavour and higher education. Hon Nick Goiran is in the Legislative Council right now channelling Florida Governor Ron DeSantis. He is modelling himself on Ron DeSantis. Hon Nick Goiran does not want to admit that he has been vaccinated because he knows that as soon as he does, he will lose all the support from those anti-vaxxers he is encouraging and cultivating and drawing along. He is relying on their support. He is modelling himself on Ron DeSantis, the Republican Governor of Florida. It is a disgrace because it undermines the legitimate health effort that I honestly and genuinely believe the Leader of the Opposition supports. I know that she has been vaccinated and I am sure that she supports mandatory vaccination. I wish she would come out and say it.

Ms M.J. Davies: I’ve said it a number of times, thank you very much.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: So why does the Leader of the Opposition’s shadow Attorney General not support her? Does he not support her leadership? Is he trying to undermine her? Does she not have the authority to call him out? Does she not have the authority to hold him to account?

Ms M.J. Davies: Come to my press conference, member, and listen to me say it—again and again and again.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: I am asking the Leader of the Opposition to tell her shadow Attorney General to say it as well; otherwise, she will be stuck in a situation in which her leadership and credibility is undermined and she cannot legitimately bring these arguments before Parliament.

Several members interjected.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: I look forward to the next time we have this debate because there is much more material to come. The member for Cottesloe was not here when we had to articulate just how clear the previous government’s failures were.

Division

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

Ayes (5)

Ms M.J. Davies	Mr R.S. Love	Mr P.J. Rundle (<i>Teller</i>)
Dr D.J. Honey	Ms L. Mettam	

Noes (46)

Mr S.N. Aubrey	Ms M.J. Hammat	Mr D.R. Michael	Ms R.S. Stephens
Mr G. Baker	Mr T.J. Healy	Mr S.A. Millman	Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski
Ms L.L. Baker	Mr M. Hughes	Mr Y. Mubarakai	Dr K. Stratton
Ms H.M. Beazley	Mr W.J. Johnston	Mrs L.M. O'Malley	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Dr A.D. Buti	Mr H.T. Jones	Mr P. Papalia	Mr D.A. Templeman
Mr J.N. Carey	Mr D.J. Kelly	Mr S.J. Price	Mr P.C. Tinley
Ms C.M. Collins	Ms E.J. Kelsbie	Mr D.T. Punch	Ms C.M. Tonkin
Mr R.H. Cook	Ms A.E. Kent	Mr J.R. Quigley	Mr R.R. Whitby
Ms L. Dalton	Dr J. Krishnan	Ms R. Saffioti	Ms S.E. Winton
Ms D.G. D'Anna	Mr P. Lilburne	Ms A. Sanderson	Ms C.M. Rowe (<i>Teller</i>)
Mr M.J. Folkard	Mr M. McGowan	Mr D.A.E. Scaife	
Ms E.L. Hamilton	Ms S.F. McGurk	Ms J.J. Shaw	

Question thus negatived.

POSEIDON NICKEL AGREEMENT AMENDMENT (TERMINATION) BILL 2021*Second Reading*

Resumed from 15 September.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe — Leader of the Liberal Party) [4.11 pm]: I rise as the lead speaker for the opposition on this bill.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Sorry, Leader of the Liberal Party.

Dr D.J. HONEY: My words of gold will be missed!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members, can you please take your conversations outside.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you very much, Acting Speaker. I rise as the lead for the opposition on this bill and I indicate at the outset that we support the bill. The Poseidon Nickel Agreement Amendment (Termination) Bill 2021 is an interesting bill in the sense that many companies are desperate to get a state agreement, although speaking with the minister's advisers—I thank the minister for the briefing he gave the opposition on this matter—apparently more companies are seeking to perhaps stay within the act. Nevertheless, state agreements are something that most companies seek because they give them rights. But they also put obligations on the proponents. Nevertheless, in this case a company is seeking to terminate its state agreement and to move its operations under the Mining Act and other substantive legislation that govern mining operations.

In his second reading speech, the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade explained the purpose of this bill—that is, to ratify an agreement made on 4 August 2021 between the state and Poseidon Nickel Ltd to terminate the Poseidon Nickel Agreement Act 1971—and offered some history. The history of nickel discovery in the state of Western Australia is fascinating. It coincided with a massive demand for nickel across the world and put Western Australia in the box seat at the time. It allowed a great company, Western Mining Corporation, to blossom. I tell members at the outset that I worked for Western Mining Corporation, although I have no interest in it and it has no interest in the outcome of this bill.

Mr D.J. Kelly: You said you have no interest in them and they have no interest in you.

Dr D.J. HONEY: No; that company has no interest in this bill.

Mr D.J. Kelly: Sorry.

Dr D.J. HONEY: That is it. It probably has no interest in me, minister. That is by the bye. It is possibly true for many, but, fortunately, some people do regard me highly, least of all my children, so I am grateful for that at least!

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: That is it, yes.

Nickel was discovered at Mt Windarra about 18 kilometres north-west of Laverton in 1969, and that heralded the start of a really exciting nickel boom. Interestingly, we are going through a second phase of that nickel boom today, because many members in this chamber who have a great interest in renewables may know that although we talk about lithium batteries, a substantial component of many lithium batteries is nickel salts and cobalt salts. To that end,

Western Mining Corporation's nickel refinery at Kwinana, which was looking to be sold and potentially shut down, has had a new lease of life as a major production facility. In fact, on a global scale, it will be one of the major producers of nickel sulphate, one of the components that is used significantly in those batteries, so we are going through another boom at this stage. The rate of nickel exploration across the state has exploded. We see a number of hopefuls in that area and a number of new mines starting up, which is very exciting.

The purpose of the initial state agreement was for the development of a nickel mining and treatment project at Mt Windarra. A second nickel mine commenced at South Windarra in 1974. Collectively, the two mines are referred to as the Windarra nickel project, or WNP. I think a little bit of history associated with this is interesting because the name "Poseidon" is fine. There was massive speculation among nickel players and this was used or misused by potential proponents to lure investors to invest in nickel mines, no more so than in the United Kingdom where a lot of investors were very interested in nickel in Western Australia. In fact, there was so much excitement about it that a movie was made called *Nickel Queen*, which was inspired by what was called the Poseidon bubble, when we saw a massive rise in the price of shares. There is some link to this Parliament. In fact, there are a couple of links—one to the federal Parliament and one to the state Parliament—out of that movie. The late Hon Ross Lightfoot, a former Liberal Senator, was an actor in the movie *Nickel Queen*, which starred Googie Withers. Some in this chamber will know who Googie Withers was, although looking at the blank faces, many may not know, but she was a very famous actor in her time. A famous pool scene in that movie was filmed at the late Hon Max Evans' house. Hon Max Evans is a former Minister for Finance, Minister Assisting the Treasurer and member of the upper house in this place.

Western Mining Corporation Ltd took 100 per cent ownership of the Windarra nickel project in 1983. The mining of nickel at Mt Windarra ceased in 1990 and at South Windarra in 1991. Processing of nickel sulphide ores from WMC operations at Leinster continued at Mt Windarra until 1993 and processing of gold ore continued until 1994. That means significant processing plants are still at that location. During the 1990s, WMC was taken over by BHP, which became the holder of the nickel assets. In 2005, BHP sold its nickel interest to Niagara Mining, which was subsequently renamed Poseidon Nickel.

The project has not restarted under Poseidon. Poseidon has formally requested the termination of the state agreement to enable it to pursue alternative business options for that land. My understanding from the briefing we received on this matter is that, in fact, the state agreement is restrictive in terms of what the company could do on that site, but if it transitions from the state agreement and is simply allowed to carry out its operations under the Mining Act, it will have more flexibility in the way it utilises that site for the treatment of ores. It will also have the potential to recover values out of the tailings dumps at that site.

The key provisions under the termination agreement were outlined by the minister. I will not go through them in exhaustive detail, but the mining lease will continue under the Mining Act, and Poseidon will have authorisation to conduct mining operations. The bill will require the company to indemnify, and keep the state and agents indemnified, in relation to the operations under the state agreement. That will last for a period of 20 years past the date of cessation of all operations. I will go into consideration in detail for a brief period. One of the areas I am interested in—it is a concern I will talk about a little more fully in a minute—is the capacity of enforcement of that obligation going out for that period. There is a bank guarantee under the existing deed of covenant that will cease. I understand that it will be replaced. Again, I will explore that a bit more during consideration in detail.

The company will be released from some obligations. Importantly, Poseidon will remain liable for its activities and indemnities under the state agreement and the original deed of covenant. As the minister said in his second reading speech, the key purpose of the agreement is to provide Poseidon with greater flexibility to progress the development of its projects under the general laws of the state. That has the potential to create jobs in the goldfields region, which is certainly something we very much support. As I said before, it is often the case that companies want a state agreement because it allows them some privileges that they would not have otherwise. We are obviously seeing the reversal here. The termination of the agreement will give the company flexibility. It can re-treat the waste and use the concentrator for other ores.

Clause 4(2) provides that the company will be released from its obligations under clauses 3.2(a) and 3.2(b) of the deed of covenant. The state will not have any claim against the company in respect of the performance of those obligations. The obligations under the deed of covenant relate to the outstanding rehabilitation identified in the Western Mining Corporation *Windarra nickel project closure finalisation plan*. I understand that the obligations will be resumed in full under the Mining Act and the regulations. I have not seen the deed. We asked for it at the briefing. The good officers are here. They informed me that I would need my best reading glasses to read the deed because the document is many inches thick! Having the greatest faith in our public servants and ministerial advisers, I was happy to live with their assurances that it contains nothing untoward.

I want to take a few moments to talk more generally about the whole issue of closure. It is related to this bill but not specifically related to the detail of it. I was a little hesitant about this bill when I first read it because I was concerned that we have a situation whereby a major mining company, BHP, has sold an operation to a more junior company with far less financial capacity. If there were onerous remediation requirements for that site, that company may not be able to meet those remediation requirements. Again, we were told during the briefing that in this particular

case, the re-treatment of the tailings dams will reduce the risk of contamination from that site. In fact, a lot of remediation has already been carried out on the site, and the company should have the capacity to carry out remediation. It will be contributing to the general remediation fund that all mining companies have to contribute to as well. That is particularly important.

Given that we have literally thousands of mine sites in Western Australia, I have a great concern that the state potentially faces enormous liabilities in the future if those mine sites are not remediated adequately, and no more so than for the base metal sulphide deposits. I am concerned about those for two reasons. Typically, in those mines, ore is brought to the surface or ore is mined in open pit operations. It is a mass of ore. That ore is not very reactive and therefore does not release metals in any great concentration. However, when the ore is brought to the surface, it is beneficiated. It is typically ground very, very finely, in many cases to submillimetre size. When that happens, it dramatically increases the surface area and the reactivity of those materials. Materials that were relatively safe from an environmental perspective suddenly have the potential to generate acid mine drainage, which many members would have heard about at least. More particularly, when it does that, it liberates metals. Metals such as nickel, cobalt and copper are environmental poisons. They do not go away and they do not evaporate—they persist forever. That is just the law of conservation of matter. If they enter local water streams, it can obviously cause environmental harm. Humans can drink that water. For example, nickel is a class 1 carcinogen. There is a long history of workers working in nickel processing plants being severely affected by a range of specific cancers associated with nickel poisoning. It is something that we should all be concerned about.

Mine closure is not for a month, a year, 10 years or 50 years; mine closure is forever. It is the nature of the surface of the earth that its whole surface is continually recycled. Whenever we talk about mine closure and say that we are closing it forever, it is really a nonsense in the sense that all of that material will eventually be recycled into the environment. There is that risk of contamination. For all of us in this place, I think this is an area that will gain more and more focus over time. I know that the concern about this is not lost on the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety or government regulators. I do not think we collectively have a good handle on the magnitude of the potential issues in the future. As I said, this material exists forever. Members may hear people talking about a permanent closure or an impermeable cap. Firstly, an impermeable cap technically does not exist and, secondly, whatever it is, it is only temporary. We need to think on a scale of 100 years, 500 years or 1 000 years. In that time, any man-made structure will break down. Potentially, contaminants could be released into the environment that will harm the environment generally and could harm humans, if humans are living in that area. We need to think about the cost of that. Whatever we derive from these operations, if we do not make adequate provision for closure while those mine sites are running and if we do not ensure that those closures are genuinely sustainable over centuries, not just decades when we may be alive, when other people will have to deal with it, the taxpayer will ultimately pick it up. In some cases, it could be overwhelming. Again, I am taking this a little further than I otherwise would, but I think this is an opportunity to expand on this topic.

The other area we need to consider with these mine sites is the actual physical stability of the residue heaps that are left behind. An area that concerns me a lot is the Collie coalfields. The waste dumps in Collie are geologically unsustainable. I will not go on at great length here, but I encourage members to have a look at what has happened with supposedly rehabilitated mine waste dumps in Germany. It is very similar to Collie, member. A popular way of remediating those sites is to smooth down the edge of the mullock heaps and then create a lake.

Mr D.T. Punch: Lake Kepwari.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Pardon?

Mr D.T. Punch: Lake Kepwari is a very good example.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Yes. It is an enormous risk. We heard some time ago in another debate in this place that there is a potential liability there of some \$4 billion for remediation. That is a great concern, given that we hear at least one of the companies mining those coal mines is in difficult financial circumstances. It is unlikely that either of those companies could meet that \$4 billion liability, and it is my great concern that one way or another the state will pick up the cost for the remediation of those sites. I will not go on, but for members listening in the chamber and the member for Collie—Preston this matter should be on the radar for us collectively.

Mr R.H. Cook interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: It is the member for Bunbury; I know. He does not have to worry.

Mr D.T. Punch: I was a bit worried about it.

Dr D.J. HONEY: It should be on the radar because this is a very important topic for us. As I say, I am reassured in this case that this change from a state agreement to bring this new operation under the Mining Act and other appropriate state acts will not result in worsening the potential environmental impact from these operations in the future. In fact, what is being proposed should result in improved environmental outcomes, with the added windfall that potentially this can create additional wealth and jobs for the state and royalty income for the state government. On that note, I commend the bill to the house.

MR D.A.E. SCAIFE (Cockburn) [4.31 pm]: It is a pleasure to rise to speak on the Poseidon Nickel Agreement Amendment (Termination) Bill 2021. As the Leader of the Liberal Party has just outlined, we are dealing with a piece of Western Australian history in this bill. The bill touches on not only the great history of mining, particularly of nickel, in this state, but also the Western Australian arts and culture space, because, as the member for Cottesloe touched on, this bill relates to a development that went on to inspire a film produced locally in Western Australia. I will speak on that film in a matter of minutes, but I want to set the scene for the original development of the area covered by this state agreement, which was originally developed by Poseidon Nickel Ltd.

In the late 1960s, nickel was in very high demand, driven largely by the United States and its allies involvement in the war in Vietnam. At that time, as a result of the Vietnam War, there was a very significant demand for nickel-hardened steel, which was being used by the United States in what was at the time advanced weaponry, munitions and the like. That drove a very significant jump in demand for nickel in the late 1960s. As a result, the nickel price hit an all-time high. In 1969, it recorded a high of, I think, £7 000 per tonne, which in today's money is something like £113 000 per tonne. Nickel was a very, very sought-after commodity at the time.

At the same time, along came an incredible discovery by Poseidon at Mt Windarra. It found an exceptionally high-grade ore that was, essentially, the Lasseter's Reef of nickel deposits. It was reported but nobody believed it. In fact, Poseidon was told to go back and check again, but, sure enough, the discovery was seemingly as good as it possibly could be. The discovery, combined with the incredible demand for nickel at the time, led to what later became known as the Poseidon bubble. It is one of the largest, if not the largest, financial bubbles in modern history. In this case, Poseidon's share price increased by, I think, 13 700 per cent over that time. It jumped from some cents to I think \$280 or thereabouts per share. Stockbrokers and the like said that that figure was too low and the firm was undervalued. I believe those brokers suggested a figure of more like \$580 per share was justified. Those speculators would have set a further 100 per cent increase on the already very, very high price. But as with all bubbles, the Poseidon bubble burst and everything came crashing down rather quickly.

Indeed, by the time Poseidon was in the production phase with nickel at Mt Windarra, the price of nickel had fallen very substantially from the highs and, on further exploration, further along in the production phase, it was discovered that the ore was of a lower grade than initially thought. As a result, Poseidon was, essentially, unable to maintain the incredible promise that it had had. It was laden with debt and once the mine began operating it was unable to service those debts from the profits. Poseidon entered into receivership in 1974. It went from incredible highs in 1969, with demand for nickel and a very high share price, to come crashing down in a matter of four or five years. In fact, Poseidon was delisted from the stock exchange in 1976. The Poseidon bubble was larger by quite some way than the dot-com bubble of the 1990s. I am not a great student of economic history, but I believe there was a bubble in the eighteenth century or thereabouts for tulips of all things. The value of tulips rose by about 5 000 per cent and then came crashing down very quickly. It led to all sorts of economic dislocation in Europe where people were tearing up other crops, other produce, in order to plant, grow and sell tulips. The same kind of economic dislocation that we have seen when these bubbles burst happened on our doorstep in Western Australia as a result of what happened with Poseidon.

Although the Poseidon bubble was short-lived, I think it is worth reflecting on that time in our state's history and the investment and the discoveries made in Kambalda and Mt Windarra that made a great contribution to the development of the nickel mining industry in Western Australia. It really was the start of nickel mining in Western Australia and, indeed, in Australia. As of today, I believe Western Australia is the sole producer of nickel in the whole of Australia. It is a very significant mineral to the global market because, as members may be aware, nickel is a critical component in stainless steel. In fact, some in the resources world have referred to nickel as a one-trick pony because something like 68 per cent or 70 per cent of the world's nickel goes into the production of stainless steel. Obviously, that is a product that people use in their daily lives. Western Australia has led the development of that industry and is a leading supplier of nickel in the global market. The last figures I could find were from 2016–17 and they show that nickel was Western Australia's fourth most valuable mineral export, worth about \$2.3 billion to the Western Australian economy. There is further potential for that industry because Western Australia has the world's largest nickel reserves. I believe Western Australia is estimated to have about 23 per cent of global nickel reserves—almost a quarter of the world's nickel reserves. That means that we have a great opportunity to continue to exploit the demand for that resource in products like stainless steel and, in the future, nickel-based batteries. That is obviously a growing market for nickel, particularly for car batteries and energy storage batteries for things like microgrids. Nickel is a significant component of those, so there is a great future for nickel production in this state.

One of the things that the Poseidon development and bubble led to was the reform of financial regulation in Australia. The Poseidon bubble was such a significant economic and political event that it attracted the attention of the commonwealth because investors from all around Australia and the world were affected by the bursting of the Poseidon bubble. In 1974, the commonwealth Parliament established an inquiry into Australian securities markets and their regulation. The committee released a report titled *Report from the Senate Select Committee on Securities and Exchange: Volume 1*. The committee was chaired by Senator Rae. This report devotes an entire chapter—about 180 pages—to the fallout of the Poseidon bubble. The committee's inquiry exposed the extent of shady and unethical trading behaviour that happened in the context of the Poseidon bubble. I do not use the words “illegal” or “unlawful” because at the time things like insider trading were not unlawful in the Australian securities market.

I thought it would be worth taking members to that report. I am not sure that I would call it a gripping read, but it certainly is an interesting read. I flicked through the chapters and found an extract that really captures some of this behaviour that the committee unearthed—excuse the pun! On page 2.36 of the report, the committee states —

In summary, by the time percussion drilling began on the Poseidon prospect in September 1969, the consulting geologists had bought for Burrill Investments Pty Ltd, their share-trading associate, a total of 50,000 Poseidon shares. In acquiring this holding, Burrill Investments Pty Ltd bought shares from existing shareholders in the company who, at the time they sold their shares, had not been given an opportunity to up-date their assessment of Poseidon's prospects as the result of the work carried out by the geologists. These shareholders who sold their shares also did not know they were selling to a share-trading company associated with and managed by their company's consulting geologists. On the other hand, one of the shareholders' presumed representatives, Mr Shierlaw, did know of the geologists' purchases, and in his capacity as a member of the Adelaide Stock Exchange he acted as the geologists' agent in carrying out much of the buying.

That extract from the report exposes that consulting geologists to Poseidon, who therefore had inside information about the quality of the tenement that Poseidon had pegged and was developing, used that information for their own financial gain to buy shares in Poseidon, knowing that there would then be an increase in the price once their own data was made available to the public. That is a classic case of insider trading, which was not unlawful at the time but which plainly caused concern to the committee. It meant that those consultant geologists were at an advantage compared with the ordinary shareholders, or the other shareholders of the business of Poseidon, who were selling their shares not knowing that there was very likely to be an increase in the value of those shares based on the information that the geologists held at the time.

A series of recommendations came out of that report. They are not solely responsible for the modern regulation of trading securities in Australia, but that was certainly part of the history of regulating the trading of securities and making conduct like insider trading unlawful. We can see that the Poseidon bubble had a great effect on not only the development of our nickel mining industry, but also the economy and a very significant effect on the regulation of financial markets in Australia.

As the Leader of the Liberal Party alluded to, the Poseidon bubble also had a significant impact on arts and culture in Western Australia because it led to the production of the film known as *Nickel Queen* in 1971, I believe. The plot of the movie did not accurately reflect exactly what happened in the Poseidon bubble, but it was certainly based on what happened. It essentially tells the story of an individual who starts rumours of a great nickel discovery in Australia and in Western Australia. The titular nickel queen stakes her claim upon hearing these rumours and is used as a tool by our speculator to promote this great investment to gullible investors. In the movie there is no incredible discovery, so the investors are fleeced of their money when they invest in the nickel company. Unfortunately, there is not a happy ending for anybody in *Nickel Queen*, although I believe our titular nickel queen ends up reconciling with a childhood sweetheart. I think that is her happy ending, but our speculator and promoter is exposed as a fraud and is run out of town. That is probably a metaphor for what happened at the time. Many people were probably run out of town as a result of the incredible losses suffered when the Poseidon bubble burst. It is a great piece of Western Australian history because the government of the day took a keen interest in it. In fact, it included cameos from the then Premier, Sir David Brand, and the then minister for resources, Charles Court, who went on to become Sir Charles Court. It also included a series of plugs for the companies that had helped finance the film. The great history of product placement and advertising in the film industry was alive and well at the time *Nickel Queen* was produced.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: On noting the impact *Nickel Queen* and the Poseidon bubble had on the development of the Western Australian film industry, I think it is worth reflecting on the fact that the industry is still with us now. It is part of the government's economic diversification strategy. We have obviously had an announcement around the building of a film studio in Fremantle, up the road from my electorate. It goes to show that the history of our mining industry has really touched all parts of our economy.

I would like to acknowledge, in that respect, the great work that is done by the Cockburn Community and Cultural Council in promoting arts and culture in the Cockburn electorate. I would particularly like to shout out to Mr Bill Wallington, who is the president of the council. He does a fantastic job running that council, just about single-handedly, with a small group of volunteers. It recently held an exhibition, on 3 October. Conditions have obviously been very challenging for the council in the past 12 to 18 months with COVID-19, but I really want to congratulate it on running a fantastic exhibition. I was very fortunate to have been down there as the presenter of the awards at the conclusion of the exhibition. It was great to meet many of our local artists in person. I particularly congratulate Toby Leek and Jean Martin. I actually bought one of Jean's pieces from the exhibition. It is a beautiful piece of Woodman Point, which is hanging proudly in my office at this very moment. I would also like to acknowledge Maggie Di Re, who is a real pillar of the Cockburn community. She had a stall at the exhibition and has always been very welcoming to me. Thank you, Maggie, for being such a great contributor to our community. I would like to mention two other local artists. One is Sandy Gaskett in Coogee, whom I have commissioned to

produce a local artwork for my office. She does beautiful impressionist paintings of Coogee, Coogee beach and the surrounds. I would also like to acknowledge Juanetia Knapp, one of our local traditional owners and a Noongar elder. Her very large painting is hanging proudly in my electorate office, really with pride of place. Thank you, Neta, for your service to our community and for your promotion of the arts and of traditional owners and their contribution to the artistic history of Western Australia. On that, I will check whether the member for Mount Lawley looks ready to go. I commend the bill to the house.

MR S.A. MILLMAN (Mount Lawley — Parliamentary Secretary) [4.52 pm]: I thank the member for Cockburn for his contribution. I also have a work by Neta Knapp hanging in my office, member for Cockburn. It was put together by the community of Mt Lawley in the lead-up to the 2017 election.

Mr D.A.E. Scaife: One of my constituents.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: There you go! I did not know that. She is well represented in this place.

I rise to make a contribution to the debate in support of this very important piece of legislation. I have said it before but it bears repeating that the McGowan Labor government, over the last five years, has really concentrated on putting in place the proper regulatory framework in order to enable our world-leading, world-class, globally significant mining industry to succeed. It is a regulatory framework that is predicated on attention to detail and working collaboratively with industry. The situation that arises, as was spelt out very clearly by the member for Cockburn, which I do not need to go over, concerns the Poseidon Nickel Agreement Amendment (Termination) Bill in which the arrangement will transition from a specific state agreement to the general mining law of Western Australia. By doing so—by changing the regulatory framework that governs this resource—it will provide the mining company the opportunity to go back over the tailings and diversify its operations by trying to extract a valuable resource from the material that it has on site.

When I think about the importance of nickel generally, my mind turns to the work that the McGowan government has done, during both its first and second term, in promoting our future battery strategy, based on our critical minerals strategy. I will refer to a statement that was made in the lead-up to the 2021 election, on 30 October 2020, by the Minister for Mines and Petroleum, Hon Bill Johnston. I quote —

- AMEC’s Critical Minerals prospectus reveals investment opportunities in Australia
- Critical minerals include nickel, cobalt, lithium and rare earth elements

Mines and Petroleum Minister Bill Johnston today launched the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies’ ... Critical Minerals Investment Opportunities prospectus.

The prospectus provides an informative investment guide to numerous critical minerals projects that are exploring, developing and producing throughout Australia.

Demand for critical minerals, particularly battery minerals, has grown exponentially and this is expected to continue to increase in the next decade.

It has been reported that the global lithium value chain is expected to grow from \$165 billion to \$2 trillion by 2025.

Nearly half of the 42 companies profiled are based in WA including Australian Vanadium, Chalice Gold Mines, IGO, Mineral Commodities, Neometals, RareX, Pilbara Minerals, Tungsten Mining and Venturix Resources.

This is what the minister said at the time of launching the prospectus —

“Congratulations to AMEC for putting together this very informative guide on investing in Australia’s critical minerals industry.

“Western Australia is well-equipped to meet the global demand for critical minerals. Western Australia is the best location to meet the demands for the ethical and sustainable production of critical minerals.

I will come back to this point later in my contribution, but I want members to bear that in mind. Western Australia is a great location to meet the demands for the ethical and sustainable production of critical minerals. The minister continues —

“Our State already has all the minerals you need to make batteries and it was recently confirmed that building a battery cathode manufacturing hub in WA is feasible.

“The McGowan Government is supportive of WA’s mining industry, particularly developing projects that create WA jobs and diversify our economy.”

That was in October 2020. I understand that the member for Swan Hills will be making a contribution to this debate, so I do not want to cut too much across the material that I am sure she will traverse because she is passionate about our future battery strategy and, in particular, about a diversified energy grid. It is something she has spoken of often. As Chair of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee in the term of the previous Parliament, the member for Swan Hills chaired an inquiry into microgrids. In the meantime, I will refer to the *Strategy update: Western Australia’s future battery and critical minerals industries*. This update was provided in November 2020

for the period November 2020 to November 2022. I refer to this because the legislation we are debating today was brought forward by the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade, who is also responsible, in part, for the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation. That is the department that is supporting Western Australia's future battery and critical minerals industries. This is what the Minister for Mines and Petroleum said —

This Strategy Update outlines the Western Australian Government's ongoing commitment to the development of the state's future battery and critical minerals industries.

Since the launch of the Future Battery Industry Strategy in January 2019, the WA Government has worked across government and with industry to implement the strategy's vision and objectives. We have attracted significant investment in local mining and processing projects, expanded our contribution to the global battery supply chain and created local jobs.

Market challenges and supply chain disruptions have prompted a refocus of the strategy's implementation activities to support the changing needs of industry and position WA to respond to global partners seeking alternative suppliers of battery and critical minerals and materials.

The WA Government has committed funding to attract the establishment of local operations in battery precursor manufacturing, the next step for the state in the battery value chain. This will cement WA as a destination for value-add activities and advanced chemical manufacturing and help unlock further opportunities to grow the industry.

It is imperative that we seize this opportunity to support sustainable development of the industry and I am confident our planned next steps will continue to progress the government's vision for Western Australia to host a world-leading, value-adding industry by 2025.

I am making this point about the future battery industry because there was an article by Stuart McKinnon on page 20 of *The West Australian* today about the Wodgina lithium mine in the Pilbara titled "MinRes lithium charge-up: Shut Pilbara project back". Let me pause to reflect on the comments contained in the strategy. There has never in my lifetime been such a disruptive event to the global economy as the COVID-19 pandemic. It has fundamentally reset the way in which the global economy works. Any commentary in *The New York Times*, *The Economist*, *The Wall Street Journal* or the *Financial Times* would have us think that we were living in an entirely new paradigm. The McGowan government, between 2017 to 2021 and again since it was re-elected in 2021, has focused on doing the right things that a government should be doing—that is, making sure that the government provides the support, assistance and regulatory framework required for companies to pursue their entrepreneurial endeavours. But when I read articles like "MinRes Lithium charge-up" in *The West Australian*, I know that the regulatory regime is in place. The article states —

The Wodgina lithium mine in the Pilbara will spring back to life next year on the back of soaring prices for the battery metal.

Wodgina, which is a joint venture between US chemicals giant Albemarle —

A firm that would be familiar to many people here, particularly those down in the south west because of the incredible investment that it is making in the member for Bunbury's region —

(60 per cent) and Mineral Resources (40 per cent), will be ramped up in a staged process to meet market demand.

The mine, 120km south of Port Hedland, was shuttered in November 2019 on a glut of supply and weak prices for lithium.

This is where strategic vision and foresight is needed. The article continues —

MinRes said on Monday the mine would be restarted in the third quarter of calendar 2022, producing from one of three 250,000 tonne-a-year processing lines, or a third of its total capacity.

"When market demand is sufficient, additional processing lines may be recommenced," the company said in a statement.

"The start-up and initial operating phase at Wodgina is expected to create 200 new full-time jobs."

I am going to come back to that point later. It continues —

Under the terms of the joint venture, MinRes will provide crushing and camp services at Wodgina while Albemarle will market the output.

MinRes managing director Chris Ellison said the mine's placement on care and maintenance in 2019 had never dented the joint venture's confidence in lithium's long-term positive demand fundamentals.

"As we said at the time and repeat today, in Albemarle we have the best partner to deliver maximum and sustainable value from world-class assets like Wodgina," he said.

"Lithium is one of Mineral Resources' two core commodities, alongside iron ore, and we have worked very hard over the past five years to establish long-life operations for both."

Chris Ellison, a leading Western Australian, is speaking passionately and with conviction about his belief in the future of the mining industry in Western Australia. This leading Western Australian is speaking passionately about how he can work with global partners to secure the supply of a critical resource, which marries so nicely, neatly and well with a government strategy that has been in place since we were elected. When we talk about our critical minerals and future battery strategy, the regulatory requirements are already in place.

But it is not just about the deposits that we have already discovered, because this government does not support just the mines that are up and running; as well as doing the work for today, we have to make sure we do the work for tomorrow. That is why I was very pleased to see the Minister for Mines and Petroleum, Hon Bill Johnston, in August 2021 announce that applications for the next round of EIS co-funded resource grants was open. I am quoting from the press release —

The State Government today announced applications for Round 24 of the Exploration Incentive Scheme (EIS) co-funded drilling program and Series 2 of the co-funded Energy Analysis Project (EAP) program have opened.

The competitive grants program offers refunds up to 50 per cent for innovative exploration drilling and EAP projects ...

At the completion of Round 21 drilling across the 2020–21 financial year, 69 per cent of projects with EIS funding completed drilling, exceeding the historical average of 59 per cent.

Just think about that for a second, members. In the midst of a COVID-19 global pandemic, an incentive scheme is driving up exploration activity, which is leading to new mines coming onstream and new resources stimulating economic activity. The press release continues —

For Round 23, \$6.3 million was offered in co-funding drilling grants, this includes an additional \$1.3 million from the McGowan Government’s WA Recovery Plan, and \$261,000 for EAP projects throughout Western Australia.

Minister Johnston states —

“Despite COVID-19, the mining industry has demonstrated its resilience in maintaining its role as the major contributor to Western Australia’s economy.

“Exploring for these minerals and commodities ensures Western Australia stays at the forefront of mineral exploration.

“Western Australia is a major employer of people in the mining industry, with more than 140,000 workers. It’s integral the McGowan Government continues to support exploration.”

I reiterate: this government provides the necessary support and assistance, and the appropriate regulatory framework to enhance the capability of our mining sector.

As though that were not enough, on 5 August 2021, the minister announced that the McGowan government would increase EIS funding in the pre-budget announcement and that funding for EIS would increase by \$25 million, from \$10 million per annum to \$12.5 million. The press release states —

Starting in 2021–22, the increase in EIS funding will further incentivise investment in Western Australia’s mining industry.

As part of the WA Recovery Plan, the EIS received a one-off funding of \$5 million in 2020-21, which temporarily increased the EIS budget from \$10 million to \$15 million.

For the past two ... rounds, the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety has received a significantly higher number of applications.

There are a significantly higher number of applications. These incentives that are being put into the market are driving more market activity, more exploration, creating more jobs and identifying more opportunity. It continues —

Previous EIS success stories include the discovery of the Nova nickel mine, the Tropicana gold mine, Gruyere gold mine and most recently the Bellevue Gold project.

A recent independent study, covering the first 10 years of the EIS, reiterated the robust economic benefits of the EIS, with every dollar invested resulting in a \$31 return.

This is what the minister said —

“Western Australia’s mining industry is thriving, so it’s important that we strike while the iron is hot.

“This additional funding to \$12.5 million a year could help find the next big resource discovery, which in turn leads to new mines and new jobs for Western Australians.

“The McGowan Government will continue supporting the exploration and resources industries as the State recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.”

In addition to providing funding to exploration companies, which are the most entrepreneurial—they are at the cutting edge; they are taking the greatest risk—a press release in September 2021 states —

A key strategy that supports Western Australia’s reputation as one of the world’s most advanced, innovative and successful resources sectors was released today by the McGowan Government.

‘Western Australia’s mineral and petroleum resources development strategy’ focuses on capitalising on the State’s natural resources to drive a diversified economy, support the regions and encourage sustainable development.

This is a committed government that is focusing on ways to diversify the economy and to support our mining and resources industry so that jobs can be created. Things like the future battery industries strategy, the exploration incentive scheme and the energy analysis project will all work in concert to strengthen and support this incredibly critical industry.

The final press release I want to touch on states —

- McGowan Government invests extra \$6 million for MRIWA —

That is, the Minerals Research Institute of Western Australia for the four years until 2024–25. It continues —

These funds will be used to further stimulate minerals research to support investment in, and operation of, WA’s globally competitive minerals industry.

The extra \$6 million in revenue for the next four years has been generated from the increase in Mining Tenement Rentals.

MRIWA has grown the value of its research portfolio from \$37.3 million, in June 2018, to \$86.7 million as at June 30, 2021 through prioritising high value research proposals.

That is a \$50 million increase in the value of the research portfolio of MRIWA. It is just incredible. It continues —

Additionally, in the 2021–22 State Budget, the McGowan Government committed \$1 million to fund research into the viability of sustainably processing Western Australian iron ore to create green steel.

It is world-leading technology. It is cutting-edge technology. It opens up so much potential and opportunity for the Western Australian economy. A previous economic report by ACIL Allen Consulting found each \$1 million invested by government into minerals research resulted in at least \$3.12 million in direct benefits to the state. The Minister for Mines and Petroleum said —

“The McGowan Government is committed to supporting Western Australia’s mining industry, which is why we’ve increased funding for the Minerals Research Institute of WA by \$6 million over the next four years.

“This additional funding will enable MRIWA to continue its open grant program and increase investment activities to strengthen our State’s mining sector.

“Exploration spending in WA is at a nine-year high —

That is an incredible vote of confidence in the McGowan government. In the face of the headwinds of the COVID-19 pandemic, and when everybody is battenning down the hatches, exploration spending in Western Australia is at a nine-year high. The minister continues —

so it’s more important than ever that we use this opportunity to invest in minerals research to future-proof our State.”

Once again, with this legislation, the government is doing the necessary work to enable the mining and minerals industries in Western Australia to deliver the dividend for the people of Western Australia.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: When we look at the state’s financial position, we can see why it is so important to continue to encourage, support and promote the Western Australian mining industry. The Western Australian economy is in probably the best position of any sub-national economy in the world, even on the back of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I will summarise presentations by Michael Court, the Deputy Under Treasurer, to the Public Accounts Committee on 14 September. He said that economic recovery is stronger and quicker than expected; the gross state product is forecast to grow 3.5 per cent in 2021–22, following growth of 3.25 per cent in 2020–21; the stronger economy has boosted the state’s fiscal capacity; the operating surplus is \$5.6 billion in 2020–21 and \$2.8 billion in 2021–22; and that improved fiscal capacity was used to fund budget initiatives, including \$1.9 billion in additional health and mental health spending, \$750 million for the social housing investment fund, \$750 million for the climate action fund, \$500 million for the digital capability project, \$400 million for the Westport project fund and a record \$30.7 billion in infrastructure investment. That does not mean that we do not face challenges, because we are still in a situation whereby we need to do everything we can to promote the Western Australian mining industry, the Western Australian resources industry and those companies that are prepared to make an investment in Western Australia, those

companies that see the potential for financial dividends, for commercial and social dividends, and those companies that see the capacity of Western Australian workers to contribute wealth to both the community and shareholders. That is why I am always so despondent when I hear the opposition talk down our mining and resources sector.

Ms J.J. Shaw: They are wreckers!

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: They are wreckers; they are underminers. I do not understand it. I was thinking today in question time that perhaps the member for Cottesloe would come forward with an apology for his carping and criticism of the McGowan Labor government's hydrogen strategy. This was just two weeks ago, in a series of questions, "Chicken Little; the sky is falling", because Twiggy Forrest is being incentivised—I do not know why or how or what arrangement he has reached with the Queensland government—to have his hydrogen plant in Queensland. This is what the member for Cottesloe said —

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.

He also said that the government should be setting up Western Australia for the future. I will quote from *Hansard* of 20 October. He said —

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.

Dr D.J. Honey: It still hasn't!

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: I did not say a word, mate, not a word! I will continue —

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.

I say to the member for Cottesloe: stop promoting those who are talking down Western Australia; get on our side and when he sees what Woodside, a great Western Australian company, has done and reads the announcement made by Meg O'Neill in her article in *The West Australian* today, he will see exactly where this government is and what it is focused on doing. The member for Cottesloe criticised the Rockingham–Kwinana industrial precinct. Does the member know what Meg O'Neill said? This is what she said; and I will quote from an article in the opinion pages of today's *The West Australian*, which is titled "WA is driving energy future" and reads —

It's with an eye on our past as the pioneer of Western Australia's LNG industry that Woodside is now looking to the future and adding new products such as hydrogen to our portfolio so that we continue to supply the products that our customers need in a lower carbon world.

Woodside's proposed hydrogen and ammonia production facility in the Kwinana and Rockingham industrial zones, which we call H2Perth, has the potential to position WA as a powerhouse in this emerging industry that is expected to play a crucial role in the global energy transition.

I do not care what the member for Cottesloe says. I think that is a terrific result for WA. I wish the member would stop talking down WA. Ms O'Neill's article continues —

Forty years ago, it took courage and commitment from Woodside and our partners, government and customers to realise the North West Shelf Project and it will take these same qualities to establish commercial-scale hydrogen production.

Today, with the support of the State Government —

This is the quote —

and by applying our skills and experience as an LNG operator, Woodside is planning to forge a new legacy with H2Perth.

Much in the world has changed since the 1970s, —

Except perhaps the Liberal Party —

but some things are the same.

Aren't they, member for Cottesloe? The article continues —

Back then the development of the LNG industry was driven by the world's need for a reliable, affordable and transportable source of energy that delivered superior environmental performance.

Today the world still needs such energy supplies, but there is growing urgency to source low or zero-carbon products as climate change accelerates and the need to decarbonise through an orderly transition becomes pressing.

At its full potential, H2Perth would be one of the largest facilities of its kind in the world, producing up to 1500 tonnes a day of hydrogen that would be converted into ammonia and liquid hydrogen for export to customers in Asia and around the world.

That is the key. That is one of the best things at the Woodside development in the Rockingham–Kwinana precinct. With the new outer harbour and Westport, we will be fortifying, strengthening and guaranteeing Western Australia's future prosperity. The only risk to that, members, is a future Liberal government that focuses on the wrong issues and just undermines and criticises.

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: They have crazy ideas! The article continues —

Hydrogen produces zero carbon emissions when it is used as fuel and is emerging as a critical component in the world's transition to cleaner energy, while ammonia is currently the most established means of safely transporting hydrogen over long distances.

In export markets such as Japan, South Korea and China, demand for both LNG and new energy sources such as hydrogen and ammonia is growing as governments establish national emissions reduction targets more closely aligned with the Paris Agreement.

We even saw that, in the last couple of days, a recalcitrant like Prime Minister Scott Morrison, who has been taking lumps of coal into the federal Parliament, has woken up to the fact that we need a target of net zero. Meg O'Neill, the CEO of Woodside, a petroleum and resources company, is leading the commonwealth government. Woodside is leading the charge. It is an industry leader and it should be commended for the work it has done and that it is on the path to a net zero future by 2050. The article continues —

Woodside has set its own corporate emissions reduction targets on our pathway to net-zero by 2050, and in line with those goals any carbon emissions generated from the H2Perth production process will be abated or offset. But H2Perth would not only serve export markets.

When fully operational, the facility would also be able to supply multiple hydrogen refuelling stations around Perth, providing a reliable and carbon-neutral energy source for local transport and heavy industry.

And there are other important benefits for Western Australia.

We anticipate H2Perth's large-scale, flexible demand for power would underpin an acceleration in our State's transition to renewable electricity generation, as well as provide grid stabilisation for the South West Interconnected System.

It would also support new local manufacturing jobs and contracting opportunities in both the renewable power and hydrogen production sectors.

The State Government —

The WA Labor McGowan state government—that is not quoted in the article, but just for the benefit of members — has already recognised the benefits of establishing Western Australia as a global leader in hydrogen ...

That is what the chief executive of Woodside says, not what the member for Cottesloe says, and I know who I would rather believe in a discussion about global hydrogen. She has skin in the game, she has money on the line and she has workers and shareholders she needs to look after. So when somebody says that the state government has already recognised the benefits of establishing Western Australia as a global leader in hydrogen, I am going to pay attention to that. The article continues —

The project site in the Kwinana and Rockingham Strategic Industrial Estates is on land that will be leased from the Government and is ideally located close to existing gas, power, water and port infrastructure ...

Ideally located! Woodside is a great Western Australian company because it wants to support Western Australian jobs and a clean green future. It is not carping at us and criticising, undermining and slugging us off in the National Press Club. It is saying on the pages of *The West Australian* how important this state government is in supporting that future industry. It continues —

In the coming weeks Woodside will continue with detailed studies, modelling and community engagement on the proposal, along with ongoing customer engagement.

H2Perth is the latest demonstration of how Woodside is complementing our core LNG business with innovative new energy projects that will ensure we continue to prosper in a lower-carbon world.

Members, let me conclude by saying this: ever since it was elected in 2017, the McGowan Labor government has focused on its number one priority, which is WA jobs. We have always been committed to WA jobs. We want to make sure that we have jobs in the future for our kids going through school. We have cut TAFE fees. We are trying again and again to diversify the economy. We are rebounding from the COVID pandemic thanks to the support of the community. We are now in a situation in which we have to grasp the nettle. It is about how we rebuild in a post-COVID environment. The only way we are going to do that is if we continue with the hard work, dedication and resilience that we have demonstrated by supporting and encouraging entrepreneurs and corporations—even our small businesses on Beaufort Street—to do the best they can to restore our economy to the position it was in before the COVID pandemic. This McGowan Labor government is well placed, and has been undertaking the work

ever since it was elected in 2017, to make sure that those businesses are in the best possible position to drive the diversification of our economy, support growth and create the jobs of the future that our kids will need when the time comes. For that reason, I heartily support the legislation that is before the chamber.

MS J.J. SHAW (Swan Hills — Parliamentary Secretary) [5.23 pm]: It is always a tough act to follow one of the erudite contributions from the member for Mount Lawley. I have quite an act to measure up to. Before I begin, I acknowledge in the Speaker's gallery my wonderful mum, Tracy Shaw.

Several members interjected.

Ms J.J. SHAW: It is date night tonight, so my mum has come in for a bit of dinner! It is going to get wild. I am the shy, retiring one in the Shaw family, let me give members the tip! I just acknowledge my lovely mum. It is a funny thing; even when I was a kid doing all my public speaking and debating competitions and my mock trials, mum used to come to all my speeches and she used to sit there as my little cheer squad, so it is kind of like winding the clock back 30 years.

Mr R.H. Cook: The pressure's on, so you better perform tonight!

Ms J.J. SHAW: I know. It is hard enough following on from Simon Millman.

Mr R.H. Cook: We're all judging you!

Ms J.J. SHAW: I have built this up into way more of a big deal than it should be. I have all sorts of performance anxiety now!

Ms S.E. Winton: Stick to the bill.

Ms J.J. SHAW: Thank you, member for Wanneroo.

I rise to make a contribution about the Poseidon Nickel Agreement Amendment (Termination) Bill 2021. It is very much a bill that talks to the crazy story of the shifting fortunes of the WA mining industry. It will draw to a close a project that at one stage in our history—I know others have touched on this—caused an extreme amount of interest and a high level of excitement, so much so that a movie called *Nickel Queen* was made in 1971. In fact, I first heard about *Nickel Queen* when I shared an office with the current Minister for Small Business. He told me about this crazy movie called *Nickel Queen* and I did not quite believe it. Apparently, John Laws, Sir David Brand and Sir Charles Court made cameos in it. A lot of people have subsequently tried to get their hands on this movie, because it shows Perth in the 1970s, and I would not mind seeing that. I googled it and it is described on IMDb as a comedy, so I do not know what that says, or variously as an action and adventure film. The synopsis is “The west goes wild as Meg Blake hits the nickel jackpot!” It sounds like quite an adventure.

The Poseidon Nickel Agreement, the state agreement that first gave effect to this project, was signed in 1971, and the state agreement has endured from 1971 until the current day. This termination bill will ratify the termination agreement entered into between the state and Poseidon Nickel Ltd that was signed on 4 August 2021. When this project first got off the ground, there was a bit of a shortage of nickel, primarily because of some challenges associated with supply as we were coming out of the Vietnam War and some industrial action affecting the supply chains. This deposit was discovered in the late 1960s. Speculation around it caused a rapid stock market bubble and then a crash between October 1969 and February 1970, which has been referred to as the Poseidon bubble. With a fall in nickel prices and the grade of nickel that was found not quite being up to the standard of the initial announcements, Poseidon went into receivership in 1974 and Western Mining Corporation took over management of the mine. It continued operating it to process nickel and gold until 1994, with the reserves being exhausted in the early 1990s. BHP Billiton Nickel West sold out its interests in 2005 to Niagara Mining and it had a go at trying to develop the asset. Unfortunately, it was not able to do so and it has subsequently requested termination of the agreement.

It is a shame when projects do not quite live up to their original expectations, but that should not cast a pall over the prospects for the WA nickel industry, because they are indeed very positive. In fact, nickel is a key mineral for helping us transition to a much more sustainable energy future. It is the key to our transition to a lower carbon economy. It is a massive enabler for improving the sustainability of our stationary and transport energy sectors.

In 2012, Geoscience Australia found that Australia was the largest holder of economic nickel resources in the world; we have about 24 per cent of global supply. In 2020, Western Australia was the fourth-largest producer of nickel, with about \$3.3 billion in sales. Our primary and refined production is forecast to rise. Our output is set to increase from 167 000 tonnes in 2018–19 to 290 000 tonnes by 2023–24. Asia, unsurprisingly, is our largest regional market for nickel, representing about 82 per cent of global demand. China now accounts for 60 per cent of world nickel demand, compared with just 5.5 per cent in 2000 and 39 per cent in 2010. There has been a rapid increase in the demand for nickel in Asia, which is our primary resource export destination. China, unsurprisingly, is our largest export market. Japan is our second-largest export market for nickel ore.

Despite the closure of Poseidon, a range of other nickel projects are still in play. We have the Murrin Murrin project, which is owned by Minara Resources and is anticipated to operate until 2042. We have the Nova–Bollinger project, which is owned by IGO Ltd. It is a new project that commenced in 2015. It is an underground mine to extract nickel, copper and cobalt and it produced 30 436 tonnes of nickel, 13 700 tonnes of copper and 1 142 tonnes of cobalt

in 2020. Then there are the BHP Nickel West projects, which have been in existence for quite some time. The mining occurs at the Mt Keith, Cliffs and Leinster mines. The ore is concentrated and sent to the Kalgoorlie smelter, which I am sure is very close to your heart, Acting Speaker.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.E. Kent): Absolutely.

Ms J.J. SHAW: From the smelter it is then sent to the Nickel West Kwinana refinery, where premium grade nickel powder and briquettes are produced, containing 99.8 per cent nickel, and that nickel metal is exported to overseas markets via the port of Fremantle. In the course of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee's microgrid inquiry process, in the last term of Parliament, which I chaired, along with other members I went to the Nickel West Kwinana refinery to get an understanding from BHP about the outlook for nickel. It came at a particularly interesting point in the market because there had been a lull. I had previously worked in the energy infrastructure world. We did a sort of market scan and looked at where we thought demand was potentially lightening, particularly for gas, through the Kwinana strip. The Kwinana nickel refinery was one of the assets that we thought was becoming increasingly marginal and may even have been likely to close. Indeed, that looked as though that would be the case; there would be tailing off of nickel production out of KNR. However, when we visited BHP, we saw a remarkable turnaround. It was having a significant uplift in demand for its product and that was a direct result of the upturn in demand for battery technologies. It really was incredibly bullish about the prospect for nickel, so much so that at the time it was developing a nickel sulphate plant at the facility, which subsequently opened in October 2021, creating 80 direct jobs and 400 indirect jobs. We were there at the very beginning of what seemed to be a real uplift in interest in nickel as a commodity linked to battery industries. It just goes to show that the fortunes of the Western Australian resources industry can and do turnaround. We need to be as prepared as we can for those turnarounds.

As I say, our Economics and Industry Standing Committee inquiry looked into the rising demand for nickel. We did quite a deep dive into that in our fifth report titled *Implications of a distributed energy future: Interim report*. It was an overview, if you like, of embedded and distributed energy generation technologies and what it would take to enable them. They are closely linked to battery technologies and we wanted to look right the way along the value chain from the resources and energy, the chemical manufacturing, and the manufacturing of individual components in assembly to dispatch into energy networks and, indeed, into our transport system.

Nickel production goes hand in hand with a host of other primary commodities necessary for battery production. In fact, Western Australia is uniquely positioned in the world by having all the raw materials required to produce batteries right here at home. As I say, battery technologies will be instrumental in facilitating our transition to a more distributed energy system, which will help us to improve electricity network operations and to utilise more efficiently the infrastructure we have at the moment and to lower our carbon emissions. It will particularly enable people to store the energy they produce on their own rooftops with their own solar panels into grid-scale batteries. It will enable people to become far more autonomous in the way they produce and consume their own energy.

Batteries are, obviously, central to the electrification of our transport fleet. Indeed, we had a bit of a look at that in the fifth report that the Economics and Industry Standing Committee tabled, although it was probably not as deep a dive into it as we would have liked. It was one of the topics that I believe warrants an inquiry of its own; in fact, the new Chair of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee may like to consider looking into electrification of vehicles. I am not telling you how to do your job, but, you know!

Mr P.C. Tinley: Yes, ma'am!

Ms J.J. SHAW: Batteries will have a really interesting role in the electrification of the fleet and, indeed, Western Australia has a great story to tell about the battery value chain. As I say, we are replete with the materials required for battery production. We are the fourth-largest nickel producer, as I discussed; the second-largest global producer of rare earths; and the third-largest producer of cobalt; and we have a burgeoning lithium industry. The International Monetary Fund has identified Australia as one of four nations that could enjoy an extra one per cent gross domestic product growth building on critical mineral exports if the world achieves net zero emissions by 2050.

As the twenty-sixth United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties—the COP26 Glasgow summit—is convening and as the world turns its mind towards being more ambitious about carbon reduction and emission reduction targets, Australia stands to be a considerable net beneficiary of a global move towards carbon reduction. I will argue that the naysayers in the National Party in particular should take a long hard look at themselves and realise that they are actually denying this nation the opportunities that present as we transition. They are denying that and harming their own communities when they stop and fearmonger around coal and the sky falling in and Chicken Licken. Those Queensland Nationals in particular should —

Mr S.A. Millman: The wind doesn't blow at night, according to one of them from Victoria.

Ms J.J. SHAW: No; the sun does not shine at night. The wind blows plenty at night up my way, I can tell you! Several members interjected.

Ms J.J. SHAW: Did he say the wind does not blow at night? I thought he said the sun does not shine at night!

Mr S.A. Millman: They said that as well.

Ms J.J. SHAW: Oh my God! Maybe before they even go down the path of resources, they should have a sit-down with the Bureau of Meteorology and try to understand how weather systems operate and what the sun and the moon do. It could be useful. However, it would depend on consulting with scientists—heaven forbid!

Mr S.A. Millman: They don't do that well either.

Ms J.J. SHAW: That is right. Even if they do, they then do not listen. What can you do? Thanks for an erudite contribution—very erudite, as I say.

Western Australia is very well positioned also to create a lithium valley and this is something the standing committee explored in its microgrids inquiry. Australian exports primarily from Western Australia now provide about 60 per cent of the world's lithium output. In fact, our lithium resources are great here because they are spodumene-based resources; they are not based on a brine, which is where the rest of the lithium produced in the world comes from. We have a fabulous resource that is world class; it is the world standard.

We have some exciting lithium projects underway. Talison Lithium at Greenbushes developed a second large chemical-grade processing plant in 2019, which will double its production capacity.

Tianqi Lithium's Kwinana processing plant began producing lithium hydroxide in August. It is a really interesting project. In the days when I was looking after the commercial operations on the Dampier to Bunbury pipeline, in the very early 2010s, the proponent came to us and said, "We want to connect a lithium processing plant in the Kwinana industrial area and we would like some pipeline capacity." I will say there was a bit of scepticism by some people in the business about whether a lithium project could be viable. It takes a lot of work from the moment a processing company walks through the door and says, "I want a gas connection", right through to finally connecting it up and seeing the gas flow. There is an awful lot of work in that and a lot of resources are committed to developing up a project. There was real scepticism, but it is fabulous to see that we now have an operating plant located in the Kwinana industrial area and, indeed, some gas is flowing down the Dampier to Bunbury pipeline. It was interesting having had quite a bit to do with that project in its very early days to see it finally come to fruition.

Covalent Lithium also is building a new lithium refinery in the Kwinana industrial area. That project will deliver about 1 000 construction jobs and 350 operational jobs. It states that once completed, the refinery will have the capacity to support the production of batteries for up to one million electric vehicles each year. This is really important stuff.

The development of a battery industry fits in perfectly with the McGowan government's intention to diversify our economy and create new sustainable industries. The McGowan government has been incredibly supportive of the development of a battery mineral value chain. In fact, we are the only state to have a clear strategy to support the development of a battery industry, and we have the minerals required to make it happen.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms J.J. SHAW: The Economics and Industry Standing Committee had a good look at the *Future battery industry strategy Western Australia* that was released in January 2019, which was aimed squarely at capturing the range of value chain benefits presented by the burgeoning global demand for battery technologies. Minister Johnston very clearly articulated a vision for the battery industry. He said that the strategy will be world-leading, sustainable and value adding, and provide local jobs, contribute to skills development, support economic diversification and benefit regional communities. The strategy discusses our comparative advantages to attract global capital, including our reserves of battery minerals, which I have already spoken about, our industry-leading, value-adding expertise and our best practice environmental and ethical standards, which is really important. Some of the nations we are competing against have extraordinarily low bars for environmental approvals and treat their workforces abysmally. When we are projecting ourselves into the world, the type of people who want to buy an electric car will want to know that the batteries within that electric car have been produced utilising the highest possible environmental standards and the best possible labour standards. The last thing we want to do is have all these people driving cars that have been produced in incredibly harmful environmental ways or in ways that really do prejudice their workforces. That is a real point of difference for Western Australia that we should be championing.

The strategy also refers to our comparative advantage in globally recognised mining and mineral processing expertise and research capacity and our world-class industrial and export infrastructure. As I said, many of these projects are developed in the Kwinana industrial area. The four themes that the strategy is based upon are: investment attraction, project facilitation, research and technology sector development, and the adoption of battery technologies. Some objectives and pathways are linked to those, such that Western Australia is to be globally recognised as a leading producer and exporter of battery technologies that will improve the competitiveness of Western Australia's future battery minerals and materials industry; expand the range of future battery minerals extracted and processed in WA; increase the scale of processing, manufacturing and service activities across the breadth of the battery value chain in Western Australia; and increase research and development activities focused on battery industries.

In the past year, despite COVID-19, our efforts are bearing fruit. The outline of that battery industry strategy is starting to come back to us. In May this year, South Korean company POSCO invested \$240 million in a 30 per cent stake in First Quantum Minerals' Ravensthorpe nickel mine. The McGowan government certainly welcomed that. On 24 June, a major report called *Future charge: Building Australia's battery industries* was released. It identified

Western Australia's significant role in the future battery industry. That independent report predicts that the industry will contribute \$7.4 billion a year to Australia's economy and create 34 700 jobs by 2030. These jobs will be coming into Western Australia, which we should certainly be welcoming with open arms.

On 22 July, BHP announced that it would supply Tesla with nickel from its Nickel West assets in WA. That is a major scalp for us to land in Western Australia. It is great to see an alignment between Tesla, which is now the global superpower of electric vehicles, and BHP. On 1 October this year, Alcoa and FYI Resources signed a binding high purity alumina joint venture term sheet. Again, that is aligned with the objectives we outlined in the battery industry strategy, and the strategy is working.

This year, 2021, our resources sector had the biggest year ever, powering the nation through COVID-19. Nickel sales are part of that, valued at \$3.5 billion—the industry's highest sales revenue in seven years, so it is working. As a government, we will continue to provide support. In October, \$6.53 million was announced as part of the exploration incentive scheme by way of grants offered to 51 exploration projects, while six energy analysis program studies will receive a total of \$245 000. Thirty-five per cent of the drilling projects through that exploration incentive scheme will be looking for battery minerals, and 73 per cent of those are searching for nickel. We can still be optimistic. Clearly, those who have skin in the game are optimistic about the future for nickel in Western Australia.

The other commodities on the companies' list include manganese, lithium, tantalum, rare earth elements and cobalt, all components that are required for the manufacturing of batteries. On 21 October, the McGowan government announced that, through the Minerals Research Institute of Western Australia, it will invest \$900 000 in the Future Battery Industries Cooperative Research Centre cathode precursor production pilot plant project led by Curtin University. This pilot project aims to demonstrate our capability to produce cost-effective high quality nickel, cobalt and manganese for producing precursor cathode active materials. Commissioning for that project is expected to start in 2022.

These battery technologies are integral to our transition to a more sustainable energy future. We have a great opportunity to capitalise on the shift away from traditional energy industries towards greener renewable resources. The Australian Energy Market Operator recently projected that renewable energy resources will provide about 50 per cent of our electricity by 2030 and many of these resources will be distributed energy technologies. There will be smaller scale solar photovoltaic systems located throughout the grid and often configured into microgrids. These renewable energy sources and mini systems will increasingly depend on batteries to operate securely and efficiently at scale in a broader grid context. During the inquiry into microgrids, we examined this in detail. I will quote from my tabling speech on that report, in which I stated —

... it is fair to say that microgrids and distributed energy resources are now front and centre in our state and nation's ongoing conversation about our energy future. Evidence to this inquiry has shown that Western Australia is home to some of the world's most innovative, groundbreaking energy technologies that could radically change the way we produce and consume electricity, and contribute to a more secure, affordable, reliable and sustainable power supply.

The development of battery technologies is key to this and the McGowan Labor government is backing it. In fact, on 12 February 2020, in my electorate of Swan Hills in Ellenbrook, we rolled out the PowerBank trial, which saw the installation of grid-scale batteries. In a little pocket of Ellenbrook, about 200 households were able to store the energy produced by their PV cells into the grid-scale battery during the day and then draw down from that. That solves the National Party's problem—if the sun does not shine at night!

Mr S.A. Millman: They've never heard of batteries either.

Ms J.J. SHAW: Clearly not. The Nationals' dreams could come true with a substitute for the sun not shining at night. They can draw down from grid-scale batteries.

It was great to see that project rolled out in Ellenbrook, and right across the metropolitan area. These battery technologies are allowing people to save money on their electricity bills, helping us install more solar power into our grid, using more renewable and sustainable technologies and simultaneously supporting grid operations.

Today, the McGowan Labor government announced the installation of virtual power plant commercial scale batteries at 10 schools in Western Australia, turning our schools into virtual power plants, utilising these battery technologies. That will test how virtual power plants can help schools better understand and manage their energy use, improving the stability and reliability of the electricity grid. That is really exciting stuff.

I have also talked about how essential these battery technologies are to electric vehicles. The EISC inquiry considered that also. Again, I stated —

... every major car manufacturer either already produces electric vehicles or has announced plans to produce electric vehicles in the near term. Countries around the world have observed that they will ban fossil fuel-fired vehicles over the medium term. The costs of electric vehicles are coming down and charging technologies are improving rapidly and being deployed across Australia ...

A lithium ion battery for an electric vehicle contains 40 kilograms of nickel. The more electric vehicles we see out there, the more demand we are going to see for a key commodity that Western Australia leads the world in producing.

Poseidon is sad but the nickel industry's prospects are not quite so sad; I would say that they are quite bullish. I think we should be really ambitious for the development of battery-linked commodities and the resources companies and organisations associated with bringing them to market, and there has never been a more important time than now for us to talk about that and back those industries. As the conference in Glasgow approaches and serious conversations are being held around the world on how we transition to a more sustainable economic model, now is the time to back Western Australian industry to produce renewable technologies and the technologies that support them. It is not the time to back climate change sceptics and deniers; it is time to be confident in our capacity. It is sad to see Poseidon go, but there are so many projects we should be very excited about. I look forward to hearing about the future projects the McGowan government will be supporting and how it intends to build on the future battery industry strategy.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [5.50 pm]: I know that time is short and I probably will not need to speak for very long because the Leader of the Liberal Party, as shadow Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade, is the lead speaker for the opposition on the Poseidon Nickel Agreement Amendment (Termination) Bill 2021, and he has already put on record our support for this bill and the changes it will bring about and opportunities that will flow from that.

I want to commence my contribution by saying how disappointed I was in the member for Swan Hills' contribution. She made some rather disparaging comments about the Nationals WA's commitment to addressing the challenges we all face in this particular period of human history in which the cumulative effect of centuries of carbon entering the atmosphere from the burning of fossil fuels is now affecting the environment, leading to climate change. That is something the National Party in Western Australia has long acknowledged. In fact, we have sought to bring to this place and to the political discourse policies and procedures to help our communities address the challenges that they will face and make the most of opportunities they may have. My own electorate is probably powering, from renewable sources, the batteries in the member for Swan Hills' electorate that she spoke about. Vast wind farms have opened up in Warradarge, Dandaragan, Badgingarra and the Irwin area, along with considerable amounts of solar power and other renewable sources. Of course, many projects throughout the midwest are looking to develop hydrogen, including in the electorate I represent. I have personally spoken to numerous proponents and I am very excited about the prospects that they hold for the future.

The National Party went to the last election with a policy on community batteries and other batteries for the retail sector. We also had policies around the development of hydrogen, the use of carbon sequestration and a version of the land restoration fund, which has since been put in place by our federal counterparts. David Littleproud has a federal policy that is very similar to the one that we took to the last state election. Of course, at our state conference this year, the Western Australian Nationals adopted a position of supporting our state to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. In the last couple of days, the federal Nationals have also adopted such a position, after ensuring that the communities they represent will be adequately protected and that provisions will be in place to ensure those communities can benefit from initiatives the government might put in place so they can be part of the solution for Australia going forward. We support that model; it is pretty close to what we adopted at our October state conference—that is, although we accept net zero by 2050, we will actively work to ensure that communities are helped through that. If anyone in the Labor Party wants to jump down my throat about that, do not talk to me about Collie and any assistance the government may offer in that area, because we are talking about exactly the same situation, which the federal Nationals have been grappling with and we grappled with in October. It is not right and it is not fair for the member for Swan Hills to take cheap shots when she does not have full knowledge of the discussions that have taken place within the National Party and the positions that we have arrived at.

With that, I will talk about the Poseidon Nickel Agreement Amendment (Termination) Bill 2021. This is a fairly straightforward bill and I think it is supported by all parties. It will enable the development of new activity at the Windarra site. The partners involved will move on to processing the old tailings et cetera and benefits will accrue to Western Australia from this termination. There is also an understanding that the bond money that has been kept for all these years will be transferred and a continuing understanding that remediation will take place.

The bill seeks to terminate the existing state agreement act that governs the company's operations at Windarra. I have the benefit of a briefing paper that Poseidon Nickel provided to us, and probably to all parties, during the caretaker period earlier this year, which explains some of the background from its point of view. I will read out a few matters from the briefing paper. If any of them have changed or since become outdated, I have not been made aware of that, so apologies if that has happened. As I said, the legislation will terminate the state agreement and transfer the mining tenure to the Mining Act. It will also replace the existing \$3.5 million environmental bond held by the state under the state agreement. We know that there was an understanding, or an expectation, that perhaps this might have been put in place last year, but due to sitting days being taken up with other matters, it did not happen. The briefing note states —

Poseidon issued an ASX release on 22 June 2020 announcing completion of its Preliminary Feasibility Study on the Windarra Gold Tailing Project which concluded that a purpose built ... plant and infrastructure to treat 4.5 million tonnes of gold tailings reclaimed from old tailings at Mount Windarra would be economical viable. The Company is now working on a Definitive Feasibility Study for the Tailing Project.

The Windarra Tailings Project will produce approximately 44,000 ounces of gold requiring a construction work force of up to 60 people and an operating workforce of 30 people over 3 years.

Up to \$4 million could be paid to the State in royalties ...

That certainly would be of assistance. The briefing note continues —

Poseidon issued an ASX release on 17 August 2020 announcing its acquisition of an exclusive option to the right to treat the Lancefield Gold Tailing located 17 kilometres from Windarra, as part of the Windarra Gold Tailings Project.

Lancefield Gold Tailings contains approximately 1.2 million tonnes of gold tailings ... These tailings are intended to be will be trucked to Windarra for processing.

It would extend the project life by four years and add another \$1 million or so of additional state royalty payments, and employment for another period if the tailings were treated at Windarra. The briefing note goes on to say —

The Lancefield tailings are an historical State environmental legacy which, if not renewed to be processed as part of the Windarra Gold Tailings Project, will revert to the State and the underlying tenement holder for remediation.

It goes on to note the envisaged benefits for the state; it will —

1. Employ circa 30 people (20 in the plant and 10 mining), and around 60 people in construction;
2. Provide the State with new royalty payments;
3. Provide an economic stimulus in Laverton and surrounding areas;
4. Poseidon intends to engage with the local Laverton workforce and town, during the construction phase and operational phase. This includes implementation of an Indigenous related Training and Employment program;
5. Remove the Lancefield gold tailings environmental legacy within the Laverton water catchment area;
6. Create opportunities for other dormant tailings projects in the region to be activated ...

If those stated benefits were to accrue, it would be a great step forward for the state, so I wish the venture well into the future.

Given the time, I reiterate that this is an opportunity to make something out of tailings that more or less had to be dealt with as waste. They will be reprocessed. We will see opportunities arise within the local Laverton community and also in the state through the development of this extra royalty stream. It is a more sensible way to deal with the residual tailings problem at the other mine site, which would have been the state's responsibility were this not to happen. It is very positive legislation. The member for Cottesloe has outlined that we support the bill. We look forward to this matter progressing. I do not know whether it will go to the consideration in detail stage.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Just a short time—to let everyone know. I imagine that we will continue to hear from other members about their memories of the Poseidon saga. I think there was a Poseidon involved in a famous rescue movie as well, which comes to mind. It is a very evocative name.

Mr R.H. Cook: What about *The Poseidon Adventure*?

Mr R.S. LOVE: That is the one I was thinking about.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm

MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Parliamentary Secretary) [7.00 pm]: I rise to briefly contribute to the second reading debate on the Poseidon Nickel Agreement Amendment (Termination) Bill 2021. As has been outlined by previous speakers, the purpose of this bill is to ratify an agreement made on 4 August 2021 between the state and Poseidon Nickel. This bill is necessary in order to amend the Poseidon Nickel Agreement Act 1971 to provide for the ratification of the termination of the Poseidon Nickel Agreement, a state agreement that was entered into on 27 July 1971.

Before I briefly explain the need for this bill, I want to highlight the significance of state agreements generally for the economic development of the state. State agreements have been used for over 60 years to develop resource projects in Western Australia. The first state agreement was enacted in 1952 and was for the BP refinery located at Kwinana. In fact, as of October 2020, there are 64 current state agreements. State agreements detail the rights, obligations and terms and conditions for the development of specific projects, and are administered by the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation on behalf of the Western Australian government. Western Australia's continued economic growth over many years has been made possible by substantial investments in the resource sector. Importantly, state agreements place significant responsibilities on companies for infrastructure development, both industrial and social. State agreements set out clearly the rights and obligations of both the state government and the companies that enter into them.

I want to briefly provide some historical background to this particular state agreement. Nickel was first discovered at Mt Windarra in 1969. The Windarra nickel project heralded the start of what was known as the Western Australian nickel boom. The state entered into the Poseidon Nickel Agreement Act 1974 for the development of the nickel mining treatment at the WNP. Western Mining Corporation Ltd eventually took 100 per cent ownership of the WNP in 1983 and continued mining until 1991, with the processing of nickel and gold ores continuing until 1994. In 2005, BHP Billiton Nickel West, previously WMC, sold its interest in the WNP and assigned its interest to Niagara Mining Ltd, which later became known as Poseidon Nickel Ltd.

In 1997, the state agreement was varied to obligate Poseidon to meet certain development requirements. Despite repeated attempts over the past decades due to cyclical conditions in the nickel market, Poseidon requested the termination of the state agreement after not being able to develop the project as required. I want to commend the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade for bringing this bill to the house. I note from the bit of research that I have done on this bill that Poseidon has been lobbying governments for a long time in this regard. It also contacted and lobbied a former Minister for State Development, Bill Marmion, who, despite being briefed on the matter, declined to get involved in progressing an outcome for Poseidon. I therefore commend the minister for bringing this important bill to the house.

As a measure of the value of the project to the state over the term of its productive operations, Poseidon produced approximately 103 000 tonnes of nickel and metal concentrate. The value in royalties to the state from Poseidon's operations would equate to approximately \$50 million in today's dollars. Of course, in addition to royalty contributions, Poseidon has made a significant contribution to the Laverton community, as is the intent of all state agreements. With regard to this particular agreement, the discovery of nickel at Mt Windarra in 1969 stimulated the famous nickel boom on the Australian and London stock exchanges. It also led to the creation of hundreds of jobs, and recreational infrastructure. For example, Windarra village provides for up to 470 people, and includes a swimming pool and sporting and other leisure facilities. A critical and important part of entering into state agreements with companies is the provision of both a social outcome and infrastructure for the communities in which those companies operate.

Poseidon has also contributed to the development of other projects in the region, in particular the Lancefield gold project, approximately 20 kilometres from Windarra. As part of Poseidon's mine closure activities, it is continuing to contribute to the region through the establishment of historical infrastructure at Mt Windarra as part of the Windarra Heritage Trail, which is a popular tourist attraction in the goldfields.

Parliamentary ratification of the termination agreement will provide greater flexibility for Poseidon to progress the development of its other project at the WNP under the general laws of the state, which has the potential to both create jobs in the goldfields region and progress the treatment of nickel tailings to extract gold. The transition to the laws of the state is important. Although the original Poseidon state agreement served its purpose, it is now time to transition the Windarra project to the general laws of the state. This will be beneficial in enabling the development of new projects on the mining lease for nickel and other minerals, which, if progressed, will employ up to 50 new staff during construction and 30 ongoing operational staff. It will allow for an investment in capital and services in support of the development of new projects in the northern goldfields regions and, importantly, unlock mineral resources on the mining lease and across Poseidon Nickel's other operations, which will result in extra royalties for the state. Previously, I spoke about the importance of the resource sector to our economy and other members raised it as well, in particular the member for Swan Hills, who was unfairly targeted by member for Moore prior to the dinner break and who outlined specific examples of projects that are progressing well in Western Australia. The strength of our resource sector continues to ensure that we not only have a strong economy in Western Australia, but also continue to do the heavy lifting for Australia. In the last financial year, there were \$210 billion of petroleum and mineral sales from Western Australia. That is a record achievement. Nearly 150 000 people are now employed in the resource sector, which has increased from 135 000 people in the previous year. Obviously, iron ore continues to lead the way. We have also seen \$16.6 billion of gold sales in WA, up four per cent from the previous year, and \$3.5 billion of nickel sales, a significant high. We have also seen success in other resources including alumina, bauxite and other materials.

It is not only the projects currently underway that are successful; a very important part of the success of our resource sector is that we continue to encourage and support mineral exploration. In fact, mineral exploration has hit some \$2.1 billion, a 21 per cent increase from the previous year, which means that WA's share of exploration expenditure is now 65 per cent of the national total. It is normally about 50 per cent. The sum of \$21 billion was invested into the mining and petroleum sector last year. Currently, \$127 billion worth of resource projects are underway here in WA. That is an incredible achievement and a tribute to the fact that the government of Western Australia has worked strongly with the resource sector, as indicated by the bill before us tonight. This was achieved because we have managed and kept Western Australia safe during the pandemic. Western Australia's domestic economy has grown by 5.7 per cent, which is almost double the growth rate of the rest of the nation, which is only 2.9 per cent.

[Interruption.]

Ms S.E. WINTON: Do you need a glass of water, Leader of the House?

Mr D.A. Templeman: No, sorry. It was just a pocket of wind.

Ms S.E. WINTON: Is that Japanese curry not agreeing with you?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Too much information, thanks.

Ms S.E. WINTON: I sat next to the Leader of the House at dinner and whilst it looked good, he might be regretting it now! I hope not.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I might be regretting it tomorrow morning! Sorry, I withdraw.

Mr R.H. Cook: He can't withdraw that!

Ms S.E. WINTON: You wolfed it down, so perhaps you should eat a bit slower. Perhaps you need a Quick-Eze tablet or something.

WA is exporting over half of all goods exported from the nation. Western Australia was able to defy the economic turmoil seen around the world and in other states like New South Wales. I take every opportunity that I can in this place and elsewhere to highlight the strength of our economic position of producing a \$5 billion-plus surplus compared with the federal position and the position of other states like New South Wales, which is \$140 billion in debt, and Victoria, which is \$150 billion in debt. Mineral and petroleum exports in Western Australia have increased by 100 per cent since this government came to office. It has gone from \$105 billion in the last year of the Liberal–National government to \$210 billion this year. That is an extraordinary performance given we are in the middle of a global pandemic that has gone on for at least 18 months. Having that significantly improved contribution by the resource sector of Western Australia is worth celebrating and acknowledging.

I echo the sentiments of the member for Mount Lawley who took aim at the opposition. The member for Cottesloe described it as being “verballed”. I do not think the member for Mount Lawley was verbalising the opposition so much, but I understand that an opposition has a duty, and it is its position and job to critique the performance of a government. But there are occasions, such as when we talk about the economic strength of the state, that there needs to be some acknowledgement for the good things that are happening. The opposition has a good opportunity today, or perhaps later this week, to congratulate the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade on the government’s extraordinary announcement around hydrogen in Kwinana yesterday. I do remember that the opposition has passed motions in this place demanding that the Premier force the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade to resign his position because he cannot seem to be the Minister for Health and the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade. However, from what we are seeing with the announcements and movement in this state’s economic success, the opposition cannot have it both ways. Sometimes it serves us all well in this place when we can acknowledge good performance when it occurs, and I think the general public would appreciate that. The unemployment rate of 4.1 per cent is the lowest in Australia and we have created 123 000 jobs since coming into office.

I believe I have a bit of time, so I will talk about state agreements a little more in the sense that most of them have been very successful and beneficial for all Western Australians. This state agreement, which is the subject of termination tonight, as I and other members have outlined, has clearly been beneficial to both the company and Western Australia. But I say “most state agreements” because members might remember the extraordinary Iron Ore Processing (Mineralogy Pty. Ltd.) Agreement Amendment Bill that we had to introduce last year. For members who were not here at the time, it was the most extraordinary of times but it was essential to protect us against Clive Palmer and his outrageous claims against the state to the tune of some \$30 billion. I will take the opportunity to read a couple of passages from the Attorney General’s second reading speech on that very, very important bill. Last week we saw that it was upheld by the High Court, because Clive Palmer challenged our right to protect the state against what can only be seen as outrageous claims against the state to the tune of \$30 billion. On many occasions the Attorney General highlighted that that actually amounts to \$12 000 for every person in this state. I quote from the second reading speech —

... in the ordinary course of conducting business with the state, a state agreement proponent comes to the state and discusses its proposal in draft form, including making appropriate changes in consultation with the state, before it is formally submitted for ministerial consideration and approval. There is good reason for this: the state and the state agreement proponent or proponents need to be aligned on the detail of the proposal, bearing in mind that the state is agreeing, by the very nature of a state agreement, to the efficient and effective development of the state’s natural resources; that any such developments are maximised for long-term certainty and investment security to the mutual economic advantage of both project proponents and the state; and to ensure that the interactions between the project proponents and the community will achieve a level of development that will benefit all Western Australians. Indeed, these are some of the primary objectives that underpin the state’s decision to enter into state agreement with a project proponent.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr R.H. Cook: I hope it is not longwinded like the Leader of the House!

Ms S.E. WINTON: I hope it is not getting uncomfortable for the minister over there! He is keeping it quiet, I have to say that! The Attorney General continues —

Western Australian governments, from both sides of politics, have always refrained from interfering in the operation of state agreements by statute. This bill —

That is, the Iron Ore Processing (Mineralogy Pty. Ltd.) Agreement Amendment Bill 2020 —

does not represent a change to that general and longstanding policy. This bill does not give rise to sovereign risk. Since the 1950s, —

This is the important bit that I really want to highlight in summary —

the state has entered into over 70 state agreements and it currently has over 50 state agreements on foot.

It is quite extraordinary to focus on this bit —

In the history of state agreements, no other state agreement proponent —

except for the one with Clive Palmer —

has sought to challenge a minister's decision about a proposal or taken the state to arbitration on any matter, let alone a minister's decision to reject or comment on a proposal that has been submitted. Therefore, this bill —

To block Palmer taking the state for \$30 billion —

does not create a risk to other state agreement parties or to future investors. Other state agreement parties and proponents deal properly and appropriately with the state in the terms of their proposals.

The Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade has acted properly and promptly in bringing this important bill to this house that will allow Poseidon Nickel to transition its works and future works in the Windarra project to the general laws of the state, which it is entitled to. It will see greater benefit for not only any company, but also the state. As I previously said, it will enable the development of new projects on the mining lease for minerals, which otherwise would not occur if we had continued with this state agreement. It will allow investment in capital, services and support of the development of new projects in the northern goldfields region. Finally, it will, importantly, unlock mineral resources on the mining lease and across Poseidon's other operations, which will result in extra royalties for the state that would not occur if we did not pass this bill. I believe the opposition will take this to consideration in detail. I look forward to the speedy passage of this bill through the house and the other contributions from members in this place.

MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee) [7.22 pm]: It is with great pride tonight that I rise to make my short comments to this quite historic Poseidon Nickel Agreement Amendment (Termination) Bill 2021, historic by infamy and what it may mean to the general disposition of the resources sector in Western Australia and its global impact into new industries, if you like, by which we try to reshape what has been a great benefit to successive generations in this state since the 1940s. It gave us a certain lifestyle that previous generations had not enjoyed and put a burden on us to ensure we delivered the same benefits and standard of living to future generations that we have enjoyed. It is a good marker of where we are in Western Australia in delivering jobs, not just any jobs, but jobs up in the technical spectrum that are sustainable and deliverable well past our lifetimes and that of our children's children.

We cannot deal with Poseidon bill without mentioning the term "bubble". Precursory research will tell us about the Poseidon Nickel bubble. I remember it vaguely as a child.

Mrs L.M. O'Malley: Gee, that old?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Yes, I am that old!

As a young, young child —

Dr D.J. Honey: Very young!

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I was very young!

My father was all abuzz at the kitchen table with 10 of us there. I do not know how he even thought about stock market investment with all of us around the table, being the good Catholic family we were—the great breeders that we are! He was talking about this fantastic opportunity to invest in Poseidon Nickel, and he got involved in the bubble. But bubbles are not new. We heard the member for Cockburn talk about the tulip bubble in the 1700s in Holland. There have been five bubbles of note that are worthy of recording here. They identify for us the potential risks that never really get too far. We always think we are a bit clever. We always think we have learnt so much and we can take our economy so far, and then we become the servants of the economy and not the economy the servant of the society.

A very good example, as laid out by the member for Cockburn, was the Dutch tulip bubble, or tulip mania, as it was called. It was in the 1630s, sorry. I am getting my bubbles mixed up. The South Sea bubble, which I will come to and was very interesting in itself, was in the 1700s. This simply identifies the fact that a bubble occurs when the price of a financial asset or commodity rises to levels well above historical norms or, more importantly, above their actual value. History might not repeat, but, by goodness, when you go through history of bubbles, it does rhyme, and it rhymes quite loudly.

Following the Dutch tulip bubble, the next most serious bubble was the South Sea bubble in the 1720s. Contemplate what was happening in the 1720s. We were discovering new continents at the time. It was a more complex set of

circumstances. The South Sea Company was the sister of the East India Company, which gave the great riches of India to the British Empire. There was so much speculation based on stories from the company's own directors in the pubs and clubs of London that the share price in 1720 surged some eightfold. It went from £128 per share, which in itself was massive for the time, to £1 050 in June, before collapsing in subsequent months and severely denting the British economy. That bubble was about the riches of the South Americas that were yet to be discovered. It was indeed true, but they had not been executed on.

More recently, some in this chamber might remember the Japanese real estate and consequent stock market bubble, which was created as a result of over-stimulative monetary policy in Japan that created an economic bubble. It is a classic example to many economists. The yen surged 50 per cent in those early days, which triggered a recession in 1986. To counter it, the government, as we see with many governments, hit the stimulus lever. Boy, have we had some here, both at the state level, the subnational jurisdictions, and nationally, seeing an enormous mountain of debt, and the intergenerational transfer of that debt will be long into our future. I am not for a moment passing judgement that it should not have been. I believe some great ways we can support the community and make the economy support society, rather than the other way around, have been identified. The Japanese stimulus worked so well that it fostered unrivalled speculation, resulting in Japanese stocks and, more importantly, urban land values tripling from 1985 to 1989. At the peak of the bubble in 1989, the value of the Imperial Palace grounds in Tokyo was greater than the real estate of the entire state of California. That is how high it got. That is how ridiculous it can get. That tells us the depths of human imagination and how we can delude ourselves that there is real value when there is not. It nearly cost Japan a decade of deflation and a stagnant economy, which we have known even in recent times, coupled with nearly negative population growth, certainly flatlining, an ageing population and an inability to support subsequent generations.

The next bubble worthy of noting here that people will remember is the dotcom bubble more recently. Even some in this chamber might have had a dabble at the dotcom bubble, and hopefully they did not get too burnt. It came around in the 1990s. If we contemplate that time when digitisation was really starting to get its pace, the desktop was hitting and computerisation was happening everywhere, so, too, was the great speculation about what this would deliver for us. Hundreds of dotcom companies sprung up like mushrooms everywhere. I remember a salient point that Alan Kohler made in an interview. He talked about the fact that the majority of these dotcom companies will not, have not and should never show a profit. They could not produce a P&L or a cashflow statement of any kind because most of them were all pure hot air and speculation. Of course, the ones that survived that we know today have been a juggernaut—things like social media companies, Microsoft, Apple and those sorts of companies. On the Nasdaq composite index, on which most of these were listed, the dotcom sort of stopped. It went from a level of under 500 at the beginning of 1990 to a peak of over 5 000 in 10 years. The index crashed shortly after, plunging nearly 80 per cent by October 2002, and triggered a recession in the United States. The next time the index reached a new high was 2015, more than 15 years after its previous peak. Of course, the biggest one of all maybe even eclipsed the impacts of COVID, which we would not class as a bubble, because it is about not an asset arrangement but an imposition on the global economy. The human-made housing bubble that we all remember so clearly actually had its antecedents in the dotcom bubble. As capital flew from that market in the Nasdaq looking for a home, people invented product in ways to get into real estate—a flight to safety—and gold followed, too, of course, and all those normal precious metals. They flew into the housing market and produced a CDO—collateralised debt obligation—in which they bundled up a bunch of mortgages and sold the risk, effectively. It was almost a mark-to-market approach and a lot of people made a lot of money, but it drove the US and then, consequentially, the global economy to its knees. We all vividly remember that.

In the US, house prices peaked in 2006 and then commenced a slide that resulted in the average US house losing one-third of its value by 2009. The US housing boom and bust and the ripple effects on its mortgage-backed securities resulted in a global economic contraction that was the biggest since the 1930s Depression. The thing to note here is that when a mortgage went bust, the debt did not belong to the individual. That is why we saw householders pack up and leave. Their obligations to the mortgage were not the same as we have now, whereby there is a debt obligation to the individual; they could just walk out.

The bottom line of this Poseidon bill is that it identifies for us a challenge around how we dealt with an asset bubble in our own recent past and the report by the former Liberal senator from Tasmania who headed up that inquiry into the Australian securities markets, which gave us the rules. Prior to the implementation of the recommendations of the Rae review, insider trading was not illegal. Someone could go to their local footy club and talk to a director of a listed company, and he could tell them anything he wanted to. It did not even have to be true; it could just be what he thought. From that review, we saw consequential regulatory changes. The role of the director now involves much more difficult or onerous duties, and the language has changed from “you should have reasonably known as a director” to “you should have known regardless”. That follows the naval tradition of the responsibilities of a captain. It is not that a captain should reasonably know what is going on aboard their ship, but that they should absolutely know, even if they did not know. Directors are now accountable to the nth degree. That is why the rules for directorships in the modern era of publicly listed companies, unlisted companies and private companies—it goes right across the board—still apply, the penalties are very severe, and the people who undertake those roles are often

under a lot of scrutiny. I draw members' attention to the Crown casino inquiries both here and in Melbourne and the fallout from those. We can also look at Juukan Gorge for an example of things that come from this sort of regulatory tightening. An operational decision on the ground had a strategic impact on the business, and the CEO and directors went. These are the sorts of impacts that they not only should have known, but also needed to have known.

This offers up a really good opportunity to reflect on how hubris and arrogance can make us think that we have put in all the regulatory stopgaps, checks and balances, oversights, the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, the Australian Taxation Office, the deed of company arrangements and all those sorts of things, and that we are somehow watertight. In that sense, we are as safe from over-inflation or asset bubbles as we are from the fragile maintenance of our own democracy.

Dr D.J. Honey: Member, in terms of bubbles, what about the bitcoin bubble? It fascinates me. The parallels to all the examples you have given are, I think, uncanny.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: That is right, member for Cottesloe. It gives rise to the question: are we in a bubble now? I note that my 27-year-old son saved his shekels, came to dad with a good wad of dough and asked what he should do. I said, "Firstly, where did you get this dough from?" He was a hard saver. He said that he had made it by investing in cryptocurrencies. I said, "Good; are you in cryptocurrencies anymore?" He said, "No, I sold out. They looked a bit hot." I said, "Don't let it go back into them!" He has enough for a house deposit now. I said that buying bricks and mortar is what he needs to do, because it is a tried and true path. In Australia, we have some of those accelerants, if you like, to asset valuations that are, indeed, worrying. The whole concept that I have been a beneficiary of, as well as many people in this room, is the capacity to offset a loss against personal income. I find that that is a middle-class subsidy in the form of negative gearing. It was a missed opportunity with the advent of the Morrison win in the last federal election, because we would have had a rebalancing of household assets in a way that, I believe, would have made affordability something that we could genuinely talk about.

This bill is about nickel, too. I said in my opening remarks that we need to take this opportunity to look at something that has a past like the Poseidon Nickel arrangements and where it will take us into the future. Not so many years ago, nickel was thought of as the dead mineral or the dead metal, if you like. The advent of the battery, electric vehicles and so on has seen nickel's price and the interest in nickel deposits and exploration suddenly go through the roof. Again, we are very lucky here in Western Australia, with the natural endowment of the resources beneath our feet, that we have the capacity to participate in the new economy of electric vehicles and an environmentally sustainable future, and nickel will be very much part of that.

Of the top five producers, we have the second-largest deposit. We are about 20 million tonnes behind Indonesia, our very dear and near friend. An interesting point about this is that we reached about 170 000 tonnes of extraction, and that makes us only the fifth-largest producing country in the world. We have the second-largest asset and we are the fifth-largest producer. On the basis of those numbers, it would seem that we could improve our productivity to allow us to participate as a genuine first, second or third global leader and producer of nickel and a safe pair of hands to provide the world's minerals. For those who are interested, Indonesia is first; Australia has the second-largest resource; then Brazil, at 16 million tonnes, is behind us; Russia follows with single digits at 6.9 million tonnes; and then there is Cuba, of all places, with 5.5 million tonnes. That may be a renaissance opportunity for that state as it comes out of its folly of communism.

These are the opportunities that present to us, but it is really important to look at where the demand might take nickel. This underpins a lot of the exploration. There is a really good map in the office of my very good friend Bill Johnston, the Minister for Mines and Petroleum, up at Dumas House. It covers most of the wall of his conference room, and on it is a dot of every single active mining project in Western Australia. Even with all those projects, when there have never been more people employed in the resources sector than as we stand today, 80 per cent of the state is still unexplored. We are really on the cusp of just getting started. That is where we are: just on the cusp of getting started. As I say, our natural position in the world geographically and geologically gives us the opportunity to create a standard of living that will be the envy of the rest of the world, as it has been for the last few generations.

When we look at demand, we just have to look at one example, and that is the famed Tesla electric car. I see there are now about three or four in the members' car park; there are more and more as people become more and more cool! Tesla's ambition is to produce 20 million cars, which is not a big number in global terms, but it will require 31 per cent of global nickel production to service the production needs of just one electric car company. How many more will there be coming from India, China and Korea? They are all moving. In fact, Volkswagen has said that it will no longer make combustion engines after 2027. That is just after the next state election. This is an area in which global demand is going to exceed regulation and legislation in respect of how we treat it. Once again we are going to see a technological disruptor. We have set our legislative regime for motor vehicles on combustion engines. We get petrol excise tax and road taxes; we are going to have to turn our minds, as a state, a country and globally, to how we are going to adapt, because it will hit government revenue, and that needs to be considered. It is going to hit a range of areas including safety laws with regard to driverless vehicles and semiautonomous vehicles. These are all the sorts of things that we in this chamber are going to have to grapple with in our time. It will not stop just because a 50-year-old nickel mine stops doing one thing and goes and does another; it will roll on and on.

Another interesting aspect of this is that Tesla will need 165 per cent of the global production of lithium. I think we have a bit of that, and I think we are good to go. If there was ever going to be an opportunity for us to get involved in downstream processing rather than just the rip it, dig it and ship it end of the process, this is that opportunity. This is not a matter of whether we can get a steel blast furnace going to put iron ore into it; this is a completely different game, a chemical game. It can happen in the metro area, and already does. That is the opportunity that presents itself now.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I will make my concluding remarks. The member for Wanneroo talked about state agreements, which are really interesting. They are nothing more than a contract between two or more proponents, under which they all agree on the same page about what will or will not happen, and really are just a plan for the divorce. That is all they are—identifying the circumstances under which the natural resource can be taken advantage of, and how it will be closed up. We have 64 state agreements. We have more state agreements than any other jurisdiction in the western world. We by and large invented state agreements, particularly with mining companies, and they gave us a great advantage in that they provided absolute certainty to the people trying to raise capital to achieve what they needed.

To give a recent example, a few years ago Buru Energy was digging around in the Kimberley for a bit of oil and gas. It had a capitalised value of approximately \$30 million—I should be very careful with my numbers here—but the minute it had a state agreement signed, its capitalised value went to \$400 million. It is money in the bank, and that means certainty for the investors, for the project and for jobs. State agreements are a great thing, but they can be overdone because they are stuck in time; they are not dynamic. We have been caught out by many arrangements made under state agreements when technology has moved on. Third-tier rail is a very good example—not in the context of state agreements—of doing a deal and then getting sliced and diced by the bankers.

This state agreement is the operative instrument that allows us to reorientate what will be done with this mine. I will stand corrected, but the Fraser Institute, one of the most respected research organisations in the world, has always put us in the top five of the safest and best global jurisdictions on a number of measurements, sovereign risk being the obvious one, but also for certainty of projects and cost inputs. That puts us in an enviable position. The investment and effort of previous governments of both persuasions over many years is something that we should be proud of; there has been largely a bipartisan approach to unlocking the opportunities of Western Australia for Western Australians.

We also now have more to do with how we attend to the environment. When this state agreement was put in place, environmental considerations were not very big in the scheme of things. That is how we ended up filling in all the wetlands in the north metropolitan area, because at the time we did not really understand the value of the natural environment; it was the same in the bush. That is why we saw unbridled mining activity, particularly in the member for Kalgoorlie's electorate, where there are holes in the ground everywhere. It is a very dangerous place to go out at night—not in town, out in the bush!

The issue is: how do we make state agreements and future arrangements with companies that join with the state in these things better for all Western Australians? We need to include in that the environment and Indigenous sovereignty, and the capacity for Indigenous owners to be part of the deal. It is fraught with challenges, but it is genuinely worthwhile doing. It is great that we have been able to do this up until this time, and long may we go on with it. I think we have great opportunities, particularly in the new economy, to deliver it. Thank you very much.

MS A.E. KENT (Kalgoorlie) [7.46 pm]: I rise to add my contribution to the second reading debate on the Poseidon Nickel Agreement Amendment (Termination) Bill 2021. This bill is important to my electorate of Kalgoorlie. Poseidon Nickel is famous for an amazing time in goldfields history. Nickel was first discovered at Mt Windarra near Laverton in 1969, and the Windarra nickel project heralded the start of the Western Australian nickel boom.

Back then—some 52 years ago—Australia was gripped by a remarkable boom in mining stocks, the most famous being the nickel producer Poseidon. Its share price rose from 8¢ in August 1969 to almost \$280 by February 1970. In six months, the price of Poseidon had increased by a factor of 350. What triggered a boom of such magnitude? The words of Charles Kindleberger help set the scene —

A larger and larger group of people seeks to become rich without a real understanding of the processes involved. Not surprisingly, swindlers and catchpenny schemes flourish.

The initial movement in the Poseidon share price can be traced back to changes in the market. By the late 1960s, the nickel price was rising, driven by the growing demand for stainless steel used in industrial applications such as alloys, nickel plating and more. On the supply side, long-running strikes in Canadian nickel mines also exerted upward pressure on the nickel price, with Canadian mines accounting for around 60 per cent of the world's production at the time.

Movements in the price of nickel directed attention to nickel miners and nickel explorers; Poseidon attracted the greatest attention. It had claims on a site at Mt Windarra, near Laverton in WA, which is some 350 kilometres

north of Kalgoorlie. The stock was tightly held, but even with the passage of time, it is difficult to be precise about the initial trigger that started Poseidon's remarkable run. However, a headline in *The Australian Financial Review* of 30 September 1969 was spot on: "Poseidon Lures the Gamblers".

The author tried to introduce a cautionary note that the Poseidon price had trebled based on very little evidence, and that the board could not explain the sharp increase in the price. By February 1970, Poseidon had a market capitalisation of \$700 million—about three times that of Westpac's forerunner, the Bank of New South Wales. In a 1969 report that would be certain to raise eyebrows today, *The Australian Financial Review* stated —

Paper profits of more than \$1 million appear to have been made in shares of Poseidon NL by an investment company associated with the consulting geologists who are evaluating Poseidon's Windarra nickel strike.

Commentators highlighted the risks involved in Australian mining shares at this time. Although word of the Poseidon find at Windarra is generally credited to having been first whispered by drillers and equipment suppliers at the Leonora racetrack, the Palace Hotel bar in Kalgoorlie soon got the message and within minutes, it was transferred again to the neighbouring office of Kalgoorlie's only stockbroker, R. Reed, a member of the Stock Exchange of Perth. The Palace, a famous pub in Kalgoorlie, was known to seed many of these stories. *The Australian Financial Review* reported at the time —

One geologist actually boasted recently that a word in the ears of 10 key drinkers in the Steak Bar could turn the place to a frenzy and cause a run on stock listed in Melbourne, Sydney and particularly Adelaide.

An editorial at the time said that the Australian stock market was more likely to rely on a call from the steak bar at the Palace Hotel than a call to any control centre in Sydney or Melbourne. Although many fingers pointed to the Palace Hotel, it was not the only source of information. One strong rumour was that drillers had been seen in Laverton with sulphide on their boots, which was a big sign. With such insights, it is easy to picture a market driven by rumour and unverified reports. While the price was rising, it was easy to ignore the naysayers. Eventually, the price of nickel fell as the world economy slowed. This reduced demand coincided with the end of strikes in Canada and an increase in the number of potential new mines. By April 1970, the share price had fallen to \$72.

Following a 1974 Senate report into the Poseidon bubble, changes were made to regulate stock markets and Australia's national companies and securities legislation. Insider trading was banned. Poseidon's fortunes continued to decline and it was delisted in 1976. The Windarra mine was taken over by Western Mining and closed in 1994. In 2006, Niagara Mining acquired the Windarra mine and in 2007 it changed its name to Poseidon Nickel so that the famous name lived on. Boom and bust is synonymous with the goldfields region but the nickel boom was extreme. As *The Australian Financial Review* said beautifully, speculative booms can be fun at the time, but like any party there are no quick and easy hangover cures.

After this unique and spirited history, which made a lot of people rich in a short space of time, we fast-forward to 2021. The bill before us today will terminate the state agreement between the state and Poseidon. Terminating the state agreement will provide greater flexibility for Poseidon to progress the development of its projects under the general laws of the state, which has the potential to create jobs in the goldfields region. The original Poseidon state agreement has served its purpose and it is now time to transition the Windarra project to the general laws of the state. This will have the benefit of enabling the development of new projects on the mining lease for minerals other than and including nickel, which, if progressed will employ up to 50 new staff during construction and 30 ongoing operational staff; investment in capital and services in support of the development of new projects in the northern goldfields; and the unlocking of mineral resources on the mining lease and across Poseidon's other operations, which will result in extra royalties for the state. Of course, all this is fantastic news for my electorate and that is why I commend the bill to the house.

DR J. KRISHNAN (Riverton) [7.54 pm]: I rise to support the Poseidon Nickel Agreement Amendment (Termination) Bill 2021. I was trying to understand what a state agreement means and what the general laws of the state mean. As a medical practitioner, the only way I can relate to it is this: if I make an agreement with my surgeon to do a laparoscopic surgery and things do not go well, he has to do open surgery and we need to make an amendment!

The Poseidon Nickel Agreement Act was passed in 1971 after the 1969 nickel boom when nickel was discovered at Mt Windarra. The termination of the state agreement is required because we need to build the confidence of stakeholders. We are fortunate to be in the position in which we are in. When I was in school, my chemistry teacher gave me the periodic table and joked that I needed to memorise it. I hated looking at the periodic table, but today I feel really proud to say that we are fortunate to be in a state in which nearly every element of the periodic table is available. To increase stakeholders' confidence and make it clear that we do not impose red tape when it comes to doing business, it is important that we adapt and make changes at the appropriate time so that businesses can continue what they are doing and the state continues to benefit from the resource sector to the maximum extent. Despite repeated attempts over the last decade, this segment of the state agreement did not really work and that is why the amendment is required.

Let us look at the contributions that this project has made to the state. In today's value, approximately \$50 million in royalties has been paid by this project to the state. The project stimulated the famous nickel boom on the Australian

and London stock exchange and led to the creation of recreational infrastructure for 470 people, including a swimming pool and sporting and other leisure facilities. It also contributed to other projects in the region, particularly the development of the Lancefield gold project, which is about 20 kilometres from Windarra. As part of its mine closure activities, Poseidon continues to contribute to the region through the establishment of historical infrastructure at Mt Windarra as part of the Windarra Heritage Trail.

The key provisions of the termination agreement include the continuation of the mining lease under the Mining Act 1978; the company will indemnify and keep the state and its agents indemnified, and the indemnity will continue for 20 years; the cessation of the bank guarantee to the value of \$3.5 million; and the release of the company from its obligations under the deed of covenant for the implementation of the 2005 mine closure plan. With the transition from the state agreement to the general laws of the state, it is expected that about 50 jobs will be created during the construction phase and another 30 ongoing operational staff will be employed. It is important that we facilitate this measure to allow that to happen. An important role of government is to unlock mineral resources and make the maximum out of them when it can. I thank you for the opportunity and I commend the bill to the house.

MR S.N. AUBREY (Scarborough) [7.59 pm]: I rise to add my contribution to the debate on the Poseidon Nickel Agreement Amendment (Termination) Bill 2021. The Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade illustrated the history of nickel in the state and, with the indulgence of my parliamentary colleagues, I wish to demonstrate my history with nickel and give the house an education on how nickel ore is extracted and processed. Many of my colleagues have discussed the importance of nickel in the renewables industry, particularly around batteries, and I thank them for their contribution. I would like to educate the house on how nickel is removed from the ground, processed into concentrate and exported, thereby creating revenue and jobs for Western Australia.

My first experience with nickel was during my apprenticeship. This is going back to 2010, when I was a fresh young 19-year-old. It was my first foray into mining on a nickel site in the goldfields about an hour out of Hyden. In the second year of my apprenticeship, I was highly enthusiastic about the opportunity to work and gain experience in an industry that is so prominent in our state. I would like to take this opportunity to explain the process of extracting the ore and how the remediation works are undertaken to re-use the tailings from most mines with acid processing.

We have to start in the mine where the ore is extracted. Depending on the spread of the vein, some mines may be open pit or underground or, in some cases, both. My experience with nickel mining was underground, so I would like to describe the process of how ore is removed from an underground mine. There are different ways to extract the ore, but in this case I will describe stoping, which is a method that involves blasting the ore to remove it from the mine. Two tunnels are developed parallel, one on top of the other, about 50 metres apart. As the drill rig goes in, it will drill in an upwards direction and place directional charges in the lower part of the stope. It will then be blasted during a certain period of the day, which is the only time when it can be blasted; it is usually the start or the end of the shift so that no personnel are in the mine except the blast crew. Following the blast, the specially trained blast crew will go down and assess the blast location and ensure that there are no unexploded devices so that there is no risk to any personnel. A bogger is a loader that is specifically designed for underground mines so it can go into the clearances of a low-lying mine. It will come in and move the ore into stockpiles. Eventually, that ore will be put on to underground trucks and driven to the surface. It depends on the mine; in some cases, a mine will have a crusher underground and a conveyer that can send the dirt up to the surface. On this site, it was an underground truck. There were about 10 in the fleet and they repeatedly brought nickel out of the mine. The ore was generally then placed in stockpiles on the top ROM. I am not quite sure what ROM stands for, but it is a general term used across many mine sites.

A loader will then transfer the ore, which can vary in grade between one to 10 per cent, into a jaw crusher, which will then crush the rock, as the name suggests, into a smaller and more manageable size. From there, it is transferred via conveyors to a silo or storage bin, before being gradually fed into the processing plant and into the mill. For members of this house who are not sure what a mill looks like, it looks like a washing machine drum on its side. This one was about the size of the distance between the Premier's seat and the Leader of the Opposition's seat, although I have seen ones bigger than this entire house. These mills are sealed with hundreds of steel balls that can range from the size of a tennis ball to a basketball. With water and acid added to the mill, using a high-voltage motor, the mill is rotated and the steel balls grind down the nickel ore into finer particles. As it mixes with the water, chemicals and acids, a slurry is created that is then transferred via pumps to flotation tanks.

The flotation circuit is where the nickel ore is separated from the dirt and undesirable minerals. Flotation tanks can vary in size from several thousand litres to a couple of hundred litres. They are all adjoining and, as the slurry moves through the tanks, chemicals are added and a large agitator—essentially a mixer—keeps the product from solidifying. As the chemicals are added, they bind to the nickel in the tanks and the nickel floats to the surface of the tank, as the name suggests. It then flows over the edge of the tank into a drain that leads into a hopper. It is then transferred to a filtrate tank by pumps. When it reaches the tank, it is almost pure nickel in a liquid form, combined with water and chemicals. The remaining dirt that has been separated from the nickel is transferred to another tank. From there, it is called tailings. Tailings are then transferred to a paste plant. The paste plant combines the tailings with the concrete and transfers the paste down into the mine, where the stope from which the ore was removed is then

refilled using the concrete and tailings that were extracted from the ore. This part of the mining process returns the by-product or tailings back into the mine from where it was removed. It then hardens, and the mining team continues to stope around the other stope. The mine's rehabilitation is done on the go.

I go back to the original process of nickel extraction. In the final stages of the process, using a highly intricate machine called a filter press, the water and chemicals that remain in the filtrate product is squeezed and blown out of the filtrate and only high-grade nickel powder or dirt remains. The filter press is a collection of about 30 large plastic plates about two metres tall by two metres wide and 20 centimetres thick. These plates are stacked across two rails, with large bars in between. As the process begins, the nickel concentrate is pumped into the bags. As a large hydraulic ram presses the plates together, a pump drains the water and a compressed air line is used to blow-dry the concentrate. Once the process is complete, two large bomb bay doors are opened below the press. The press is then gradually opened so as not to overload the belt below. As it opens, the large sheets of concentrated nickel powder are then dropped on to a running conveyor below. The conveyor is surrounded by shielding to prevent the nickel powder being blown off the conveyor due to its fine particles and light weight. It is then transferred into a sealed shed that protects the stockpile from the wind and stops any of the nickel getting into the environment. A loader will then transfer the concentrate onto a road train, which will then transport it off site to create revenue and jobs for the people of Western Australia.

That was a simplified version of what is a very intricate and somewhat dangerous process at times with the acid and extraction processes underground. There are many variations to this process. A similar process is used in copper and goldmining; I have worked in these other sectors. One big factor in this process is the workforce. A lot of the sites I have worked on are heavily automated. Part of my role was to maintain the instruments and sensors that allow that automation. Although much of it is automated, operators are essential in the operation and maintenance of the plant.

I would like to describe the conditions for the workforce at this particular site. As it was my first experience in the FIFO industry and the resources sector, I will say from the outset that it was in a construction period, which can be very different from operations and maintenance periods on sites. I spent three to four months working on this site in the recommissioning of the plant, completing three swings. I did two four-and-one swings—four weeks on, one week off—and then I completed a final five-week swing. I was an energetic and enthusiastic young bloke who was keen on chasing the available cash. I did not understand at the time the effects working there had on my mental health. During the recommissioning phase of the mine and plant, there was no cell reception or wi-fi. The only contact we had with the outside world was a 15-minute capped phone call home on one of the two phones on site. For a teenager not long out of school, this was a tough and lonely period, but, as many do, I worked hard, sucked it up and pushed through. The money satisfied me. I also became very good at pool and sunk a few tins with the lads!

During a recent Chamber of Minerals and Energy tour of mine sites in the Pilbara, I joined many of my parliamentary colleagues at the airport at 5.30 am for a flight to the Pilbara before a full day of experiencing mines across the Pilbara region. I will not name names, but I could not help but laugh when near the end of the day a few of my colleagues started to complain about how long the day was. We flew up there and sat on an air-conditioned bus most of the day! We sat there for 12 hours and then went back and had dinner and did it all again at six o'clock the next day. I may have pointedly said to some members, "Welcome to the life of your constituents who are the 150 000 FIFO workers across our entire state." Many of them would not do two days of these kinds of swings. They fly up and do two weeks. And they do not sit on an air-conditioned bus; they usually do hard manual labour in very arduous conditions.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.E. Kent): Are you sure you do not want to name names, member for Scarborough?

Mr S.N. AUBREY: I do not think you were there, Madam Acting Speaker.

The ACTING SPEAKER: No, I had constituent duties.

Mr J.N. Carey: Name names; I bet it was Ali!

Mr S.N. AUBREY: I was not there with the member for Perth, but I can only imagine that he would have been one of them!

Mr J.N. Carey: Member, I didn't go on the trip!

Mr S.N. AUBREY: During my time in the industry, I worked many of the shifts—five and one, four and one, three and one, two and one, two and two, eight and six, 18 and 10, and five and two. Many of these shifts are also night-shift work. Over the last seven years, I spent more time in the Pilbara than I did at home in Scarborough. I was a strong advocate in the industry for better mental health conditions on many of the sites where I have worked. I would not change my time in the industry as it has given me resilience and an experience that not many in Western Australia, and even fewer in this Parliament, have. But just as I have educated the house on how nickel is extracted in Western Australia, I want to emphasise the importance and efforts of Western Australia's resources workforce, including the roughly 150 000 fly-in fly-out workers who extract those resources. With that, I commend this bill to the house.

MRS L.M. O'MALLEY (Bicton) [8.10 pm]: I rise to speak on the Poseidon Nickel Agreement Amendment (Termination) Bill 2021, and in so doing I would like to reassure members in the house this evening that I am not one of those members who was complaining on the bus, as the speaker before me mentioned.

Mr J.N. Carey: Shame!

Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY: Okay. I will begin by reflecting upon the background of the bill and its journey to us, and will briefly go through the bill itself. I am sure that members who spoke before me did so in great detail, so I will not dwell too much on specific details. I will focus mainly on the history of the subject of the bill and on the element itself, particularly as it relates to our transition to a more sustainable energy future. I also acknowledge the member for Willagee and other members who spoke about the importance of this element in battery technology, and how that can then be utilised in electric vehicles. In so doing, I acknowledge my daughter, Matilda, who has a fascination with Tesla. We cannot go past a Tesla without stopping to admire it!

In speaking to some of the history around the bill, I will begin with Poseidon itself. The book *The Poseidon Boom* gives a detailed account of the rise and fall of Poseidon. A promotional blurb for the book hooks the reader in with the subtitle “The people. The shares. The company. The story.” The book goes on to tell the story of how Poseidon created one of the biggest mining booms ever witnessed by the Australian stock exchange, which began in Adelaide, South Australia in September 1969. The story of Poseidon begins with the story of Ken Shirley. Kenneth (Ken) George Shirley, 1914 to 1992, was a prospector and discoverer of the nickel find at Mt Windarra, near Laverton, for Poseidon Nickel that sparked a stock market boom and bust in 1969–70. Born in Queens Park, his family lived in South Australia and Western Australia, moving to follow his father’s occupation as a carrier and camel driver. In speaking to the bill, as the member for Kalgoorlie did before me, I think it is important to acknowledge—I am sorry, you are sitting right in front of me, Acting Speaker! I was looking to your seat but you are right there! I acknowledge the way that you really threaded the story, in particular of the goldfields, and how that engages with this bill, because I think it is important to reflect, when we can, on that rich history. On first reading, the content of the bill looked a bit dry and not something that we could get super excited about as we prepared to speak on it, but it is actually inherently about people because it tells the story of how the nickel boom came to be, and that is absolutely the story of those individuals.

Shirley attended school in Adelaide until the age of 13 and then began fencing and shepherding work in the Gawler Ranges of South Australia before the family moved to Coober Pedy to try their luck at opal mining. In 1930, Ken was introduced to prospecting by his elder brother Stan, and the brothers prospected for gold around Arltunga and Tennant Creek, with limited early finds. In 1936, he pegged the Jubilee Mine in Tennant Creek and was later joined by his girlfriend, Billie. With the outbreak of World War II, Shirley joined the RAAF air crew in Perth and commenced staff-pilot flying until he joined the 96 Squadron, and served in Borneo until the war’s end. He then returned to Tennant Creek. From 1960 to 1961, Ken Shirley supervised work to drill Consolidated Gold Mining Areas NL’s Queen of Sheba prospect and re-pegged the 150-acre mineral lease known as Golden Forty. When Kambalda’s nickel discovery spurred nickel exploration in Western Australia, Ken and Billie returned to the state, prospecting from Kambalda through to Laverton. In 1968, Norm Shierlaw and Clem Wegener contracted Shirley to prospect on Poseidon’s lease. Shirley ranged as far as 402 kilometres north of Laverton and over 160 kilometres to the south searching for nickel. In September 1969, he noted caps of nickel sulphide in a banded iron ore formation and pegged 10 800 acres of land at Mt Windarra, 24 kilometres north west of Laverton. Following his role in the discovery of the Mt Windarra nickel deposits, Shirley continued to work on miscellaneous sampling campaigns, before moving to Port Douglas in 1975. An article in Sydney’s *The Sun*, dated Thursday, 15 January 1970—it is tiny, tiny writing, so I will have a close look—states —

Five new paper millionaires were created in just one hectic minute on Sydney Stock Exchange today.

Each of thme—including one Sydney man—became owners of shares worth \$2 million.

It is quite incredible to attempt to visualise what the excitement must have been at that time! A quote about the book itself, which details the boom, reads —

“It is fitting, and somehow typically Australian, that Poseidon, the glamour galloper of the nickel field, takes its name from a racehorse that won the Melbourne Cup.”

Today it is possible to stand in the area where Ken Shirley stood in April 1969 and decided to test for the presence of nickel. Ken discovered gossan (weathered surface rocks of underlying mineralisation), in which the first indication of nickel was noticed.

Occurring as it did at a time when nickel was in short supply, the discovery triggered a rush for shares in Poseidon that reverberated through the stock market of the world. Fortunes were made and lost in all parts of the globe as the shares went from \$0.80 to \$280.00 in five months and then down to \$39.00 ten months later and, by 1976, to \$0.38.

If Shirley had missed this location, the ore body would have stayed where it was until someone else found it. This might have been at a point in time when nickel was plentiful, or when another material had superseded it. One can only speculate.

He did find it however in April 1969 and the rest, as they say, is history.

The major nickel discovery at Mt Windarra in Laverton, Western Australia, would lead to what would become known as the Poseidon bubble. As other members have talked about, the Poseidon bubble was a stock market bubble in which the price of Australian mining shares soared in late 1969 and then crashed in early 1970. It is interesting to note, as the member for Willagee did earlier, that, at the time, what we now know as insider trading was in fact a legal activity. We know that in the late 60s, nickel was in high demand due to the Vietnam War, but there was a shortage of supply due to industrial action against the major Canadian supplier Inco. These factors pushed the price of nickel to record levels. The mineral exploration company Poseidon made a major nickel discovery at Mt Windarra and, as we say, the rest is indeed history.

I am going to skip over some of the notes that I had made on the bubble because quite a few members have already talked about that. I am going to move on to quickly note some of the benefits of nickel itself and what nickel in fact is. The ancient Chinese used nickel alloys, calling them paktong. However, it was 1751 before nickel was first isolated by a Swedish chemist, Axel Cronstedt. In the nineteenth century, nickel was popular for making items such as cutlery. In 1889, James Riley gave a historic speech to the Iron and Steel Institute of Great Britain, declaring that tests had shown that the steel contained in nickel gave the alloy almost unbelievable strength. From then on, nickel alloy steels became vital materials for a whole range of uses. There was an especially large demand for nickel during the two world wars for making armour plate for vehicles.

Most mined nickel derives from two types of ore deposits that form in very different geological environments. Acting Speaker, there follows in my notes a lot of references to the specific detail of those various deposits in geological terms, which I am not going to even pretend to try to pronounce! We know that nickel has played a really important historic role. It is in fact a mineral, the use of which is at this time in transition. It is undoubtedly incredibly important in our energy future as an important base element.

Briefly, in the Nickel Institute's publication of 19 February 2020, there was an article titled "Opportunity knocks for nickel". It states —

Nickel's role in enabling technologies is not always common knowledge. Yet its versatile properties present great opportunity for the nickel industry.

The article goes on to refer to the importance of educating future engineers about the way in which the element can be used and how the industry tackles perceptions of high cost and lack of knowledge about the metal. The Nickel Institute plays a role in providing some of that educational framework.

We also know that Western Australia is an incredibly important place where nickel is found. Australia has the largest nickel deposits in the entire world. Western Australia has the largest of the nickel resources in Australia, with 96 per cent of total Australian resources contained within nickel sulphide and—that is another geology-type word that I am not going to try to pronounce —

Dr D.J. Honey: Lateritic nickel.

Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY: Member for Cottesloe, I take it on notice when it comes to pronouncing tricky words from yourself —

Dr D.J. Honey: Let me tell you I'm right on this one!

Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY: I am not going to go there! I commend the member for Cottesloe's bravery in attempting to pronounce words, even ones that are not always that tricky. I am not even going to go there.

I am going to bring my contribution to a close, simply by saying that the story of nickel is one of transition. It is an incredibly important mineral. Although this bill will conclude one chapter, if you like, in the transition from being a state agreement, it certainly will open up a brand new chapter, one that I think is incredibly exciting. I commend this bill to the house.

MS M.J. HAMMAT (Mirrabooka) [8.23 pm]: I also rise to speak in support of the Poseidon Nickel Agreement Amendment (Termination) Bill 2021. Other members before me have quite capably and in some detail spoken about the background to this bill and about state agreements, of which this is one, and have recognised that Western Australia has a number of state agreements and they have been very important in how we developed the mineral resources in this state. This particular agreement tells us a story. Many members have spoken about the boom-and-bust cycle that characterises many endeavours in the mining industry, and this one with Poseidon Nickel is no different. In the interests of time, and recognising that it is a late hour, in my contribution tonight I do not want to reflect on the role that state agreements have played, and I do not want to add to the recounting of the history of Poseidon Nickel and the wild adventure that it was. I want to talk a bit about the nickel industry and what that means in Western Australia as we look forward to how this important mineral will be used to power a very different future, and how indeed it will herald a transition, I suppose, as we move towards low-carbon emissions in the future.

Western Australia is obviously an important producer of nickel. It is the only nickel producer in Australia at the moment. Nickel has been a very important mineral resource for our state for some time, although its favour has ebbed and flowed, largely because it has been able to be substituted with other ores that vary in price. The main use

of nickel has been, as others have said, for stainless steel. Nickel has been very attractive for that production over time because it is hard. It is used in more than 300 000 products, including consumer and industrial products, by the military, in aerospace and in architectural applications. It is widely used, but, of course, the majority is used to manufacture stainless steel.

Nickel is also a key component in the manufacture of lithium ion batteries. That is obviously where, forward looking, we can see many applications for nickel. For that reason, it is expected that the demand for high-quality nickel sulphide will increase in coming years as we move more and more towards the widespread use of electric vehicles. There are a lot of estimates about what that will look like, but there will be a significant increase in demand. The Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia estimates that the demand for lithium ion batteries is expected to increase by 24 per cent to 26 per cent annually until 2030, and that there will be 314 million electric vehicles on the roads by 2035. That is almost unimaginable today, but, clearly, there will be a significant increase.

As others have said before me, Western Australia is the only state in Australia with a battery industry development strategy. That underlines the fact that this state and the McGowan Labor government recognises the importance of batteries to the future and this state's excellent position to capitalise on this as a result of our rich mineral deposits. The future battery strategy is important, because it raises market awareness. It also contributes to investment attraction. It lays the groundwork for the development of downstream activity so that minerals are not just mined and shipped off but are used for downstream processing, and consideration will be given to how we refine the ore and also how we manufacture the batteries in the future.

WA has many natural advantages for batteries. As others have said, Western Australia has a very rich endowment of the minerals that go into battery production. This state already has a world-class mining industry. That means we are well positioned to take advantage of mining these new minerals. We also have an environment that has a very strong environmental, social and governance framework within which companies can operate.

It is interesting that earlier this month, the International Monetary Fund identified that Australia is one of four nations around the world that could experience a significant increase in economic growth of up to one per cent as a result of the change. I want to read from an article that appeared in *The Australian Financial Review* of 13 October. It states —

Australia is in pole position to benefit from a sixfold increase in demand for so-called “critical minerals” worth ... \$17.6 trillion —

That is in Australian dollars —

over the next two decades, driven by the race to hit net zero emissions, according to analysis from the International Monetary Fund.

The IMF estimates that Australia's annual economic growth could increase by one percentage point as a result of that. The IMF specifically selected nickel, copper, lithium and cobalt as the top four energy transition metals that are likely to see surges in prices and production as the world works toward net zero emissions by 2050. It is a very important mineral as we look to the future. There are significant opportunities to benefit not only Australia, but also Western Australia particularly, because of our natural endowments of these materials and the work that the McGowan Labor government is doing to ensure that our state can take advantage of those things.

WA is already the largest producer of lithium and one of the top five producers of nickel, rare earths and cobalt. We already have significant minerals, but we are doing much more than that. As I said, the McGowan Labor government is actively encouraging development and downstream processing in this industry to ensure that we can take advantage of battery technologies. At the end of last year, we had the announcement that Covalent Lithium was building a lithium refinery in Kwinana, which, once complete, will support the production of batteries for up to one million electric vehicles a year. These are significant developments.

I do not want to take too long because of the lateness of the hour, but in my time today, I want to talk a little bit about batteries and the work that has been happening in that space. One of the recent announcements of the McGowan government that I think was really important was the release of the electric vehicle strategy and the \$21 million for an electric vehicle fund to support the uptake of electric vehicles. At the same time, the government announced the largest single investment in electric vehicle charging infrastructure by any state or territory. We in Western Australia are creating Australia's longest—perhaps one of the world's longest—electric vehicle charging infrastructure network. It will stretch from Perth to Kununurra in the north, to Esperance in the south and to Kalgoorlie in the east. There will be stations along the way to ensure that WA residents or visitors to the state can access fast-charging stations along major travel routes and in cities and towns. This will encourage the purchase and use of electric vehicles as people are able to undertake those longer distance journeys, being confident that they have a network of charging stations to support that. This network is a great initiative that will increase the uptake of electric vehicles and, as we build the electric vehicle charging stations, it will also create jobs, particularly in regional areas. The state government is also leading by example. It is committed to increasing its own fleet of electric vehicles and installing electric vehicle charging stations in government buildings to ensure that we are able to run a fleet of vehicles that will take advantage of these technologies.

I also want to include in my contribution tonight a celebration of the electric bus that is coming to Joondalup. Just last week, we learnt that the first Transperth electric bus had arrived in Perth. It is getting ready for operation in January 2022 and will be trialled on the Joondalup CAT bus route. It will be the first time that an electric vehicle will be used on the Transperth network. The trial will determine its reliability, efficiency and performance. If it is successful, a second bus will be put into operation on the Joondalup network. The increased uptake of electric vehicles is really encouraging. It is also important that as we bring on electric vehicles, we upgrade the infrastructure around them. I have already talked about the electric vehicle charging stations network. As part of the electric bus coming to Joondalup, there will be upgrades to the bus depot so that we have a high-voltage charging system to allow that bus to be charged.

What is also really pleasing is that this initiative is part of a contract arrangement with Volvo Buses in partnership with Volgren Australia to supply buses. The contract includes the potential to deliver additional electric vehicles in the future if this trial is a success, and, most pleasingly, it also provides that should the trial be successful and more electric buses are needed in the future, they will be fitted out locally at the Volgren facility in Malaga, which is right next door to my electorate of Mirrabooka. It is another great initiative that will support local jobs and apprenticeships, as well as drive a transition to a new energy economy.

The final thing that I want to comment on this evening is the proposed big battery in Kwinana, which, again, is another excellent initiative. It will be a big battery for an important part of the world, which I believe was referred to as the “centre of Western Australia” earlier today, although I would dispute that.

Mr R.H. Cook: The universe on other occasions, but just Western Australia tonight.

Ms M.J. HAMMAT: It is really exciting, though, that not only is Kwinana the heart of the universe, but also it will now have a big battery. The McGowan government, through Synergy, is supporting the construction of this and it will be installed in Kwinana. I am told that it will be the size of 22 tennis courts. I did not know there was spare room for that many tennis courts in Kwinana! It will be a significant battery that will allow for the storage of excess solar power generated during the day that can then be drawn down during late afternoon peak periods or the evening.

Mr R.H. Cook: Member, the great irony of where they are located is that it’s where the former stockpile of the coal was for the power station. It’s beautiful.

Ms M.J. HAMMAT: That is a sensible use of a former stockpile. What an important symbol of the transition, and as we move away from coal, we are in fact moving to these new ways of storing and generating energy. We know that these changes will drive reductions in emissions, which will be of enormous benefit to our environment. Importantly, it will set up WA as a leader in these new technologies. We can really take advantage of the rich minerals and resources that we have in this state to drive, through the future battery strategy, a plan to refine those minerals, then convert them through manufacturing and use them to drive different energy production and uses in this state. I think the future is very exciting.

We have talked a lot this evening about Poseidon Nickel and its exciting past of boom and bust, but, clearly, there is a bright future in this state, and nickel will be at the heart of those new technologies. I am really excited to be part of a government that understands that we need to have policies and strategies to develop those industries. We need to invest in and support those industries so that we can diversify the economy and take advantage of the wealth of minerals that we have in this state and not just dig them out of the ground to export them, but develop them and use them to our advantage and do it in ways that we can create jobs and skilled employment for apprentices and trainees and invest in the long-term future of the state.

Others have spoken about how this state’s approach compares with the federal government’s approach to net zero emissions and its dogged avoidance of the issue. It really had to be dragged kicking and screaming to deal with this issue as the conference at Glasgow approaches, but I do not want to dwell any more on that tonight due to the lateness of the hour.

I will conclude by reiterating that this bill, although it speaks to the past, speaks to an exciting past for Poseidon Nickel. I think the future for not only nickel, but also all the important minerals that we have here, and the work that is happening in this government to make sure that we exploit those minerals for the benefit of all Western Australians and for the future, is a really exciting development. I am very excited to commend this build the house.

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade) [8.38 pm] — in reply: Thank you, Acting Speaker, for the opportunity to respond and complete the second reading stage of the Poseidon Nickel Agreement Amendment (Termination) Bill 2021. I must confess that when the Leader of the House allocated such a generous period this evening for members to make a contribution, I wondered with some trepidation what they would discuss, as the bill itself is a fairly simple piece of legislation. However, I was delighted to hear from all members about the interesting history and importance of this legislation and the emergence of law as it came about.

I want to commend the member for Cockburn for his contribution about the bubble and the goings-on around that time. I also commend the insights of the members for Cottesloe and Scarborough about the chemical and mechanical

processing of the ore and the interesting processes that go on with that. I also want to commend the members on their acknowledgement of just how important this is as one of the roles of Parliament. As the member for Willagee observed, Western Australia is unique in its use of state agreements as a way of ensuring we can provide a good investment environment and bring complex projects into being, therefore enjoying the great benefits that come from that, with the jobs and economic activity generated and the royalties and the boost created for the state government's finances. As members of this Parliament, we should feel rightfully proud that we continue this great Western Australian tradition, as the member for Willagee observed, of creating one of the safest places for investors. The sovereign risks in Western Australia are internationally recognised as being incredibly low. The value that produces for people to invest with confidence is incredibly important for the future of our state. Indeed, that has been borne out in recent history.

It is perhaps worth digging into the reason, on some occasions, we take the state agreement route as opposed to relying upon the strengths of the Mining Act. The great strength of state agreements is that they do not take a one-size-fits-all approach. It is about the agreements being unique in dealing with the challenges, opportunities and dimensions of a proponent's project and making sure the state can create the necessary environment for them to invest, being sure they have access ways, infrastructure, transport corridors and power. All those elements come together in a fairly complex way.

Some of the criteria used in determining whether we use state agreements is whether matters can be dealt with under the laws of the land—for instance, private rail, local content, domestic gas reservations and those sorts of features. There is the life span of the project, the requirement for long-term certainty for the proponents and the existence of extensive or complex land tenure issues. We all know that the interaction of native title, pastoral leases, mining leases and other forms of licence access agreements can sometimes produce a great deal of complexity that the state agreements can cut through. There is the problem of whether the project is created in a relatively remote area, thus requiring significant infrastructure development such as rail networks. There is the significance of the project to our economic development. Large projects by their very nature require the state to knit together a range of approvals and mechanisms in order for them to happen. I reflect on the member for Cottesloe's old employer, Alcoa, having one of the oldest state agreements, which I think was crafted back in 1955, for the Alcoa development in Kwinana, where there is a whole range of different infrastructure—pipelines, roads, storage facilities and so on—that all had to be brought together in a very complex way. The state agreement provides a great deal of certainty.

State agreements are essentially contracts between the government of Western Australia and the proponent that are ratified by an act of the state Parliament. Although it might seem cumbersome that we have to come to this place each time we need to create even minor changes to the state agreement, it is an important part of continuing to provide confidence to proponents that the state is taking their business very seriously. State agreements have been regularly used by successive WA governments to foster resource development such as mineral, petroleum, wood extraction and related downstream processes, together with essential related infrastructure investments. However, the Poseidon Nickel state agreement is no longer a suitable vehicle for the company, and the state has agreed with the company to transfer the project to the Mining Act, including contributing to the mining rehabilitation fund. Western Australia's Mining Act is also globally recognised as the benchmark legislation for mineral extraction, providing a stable, low sovereign risk investment for companies. This is why state agreements have been needed less over time and why the Poseidon Nickel project has every comfort in transferring to the Mining Act.

Western Australia's minerals belong to the Crown, and any person or company wishing to conduct exploration or mining activities needs to obtain a mineral tenement from the department. The Mining Act 1978 establishes the framework for which mineral exploration and mining activity can occur. The Mining Regulations 1981 set out the administrative processes for authorising these activities through the grant of a tenement. The system for administering tenements under the Mining Act is based on a first-in-time principle. This means that the land will be allocated to the individual or company that applies for eligible land and fulfils all the conditions for grant before anyone else. Turnover of the tenement ground is an important principle for the Mining Act, as it ensures that areas are available to be adequately explored for potential resources. The Poseidon Nickel project will now have to fulfil these requirements.

As a number of members have observed, this will also enliven the mining rehabilitation fund and the obligations of Poseidon's project partners towards that. For members' information, the MRF is a pool fund levied annually according to the environmental disturbance on a mining tenement at the annual reporting date. Reporting of disturbance is compulsory for all mines operating under the Mining Act 1978, and all mines with rehabilitation liability estimated over \$50 000 pay levies based on their areas of disturbance. The member for Cottesloe highlighted the importance of the MRF, because, as he said, we expect these mines to be retired in perpetuity, so the liabilities of the state are expensive if we do not have the resources necessary to make sure that we continue to update any potential contaminants and their impact on the environment and that we can continue to rehabilitate the mine site so the environmental values can be resurrected.

As many members have observed, this whole project has a colourful past. I am really pleased that members celebrated it in their speeches tonight, talking about the various aspects of this project over many years. As some have observed,

it was a subject of a Western Australian film made in 1971 called *Nickel Queen*. This title was used in relation to you earlier in the proceedings, Acting Speaker (Ms A.E. Kent), a title you may yet find sticks in your role as the member for Kalgoorlie! I am grateful to Wikipedia, a globally recognised reference tool, for providing members with some detail of this film. It was an Australian comedy film starring none other than Googie Withers. When I revealed this fact earlier in the evening to the Leader of the House, he went weak at the knees!

I am not familiar with Googie Withers, but clearly the Leader of the House is very familiar with Googie Withers and was very excited to be able to recount his fondness of her and the films that she played in. It was directed by her husband—I am sorry, Leader of the House—John McCallum. Wikipedia states —

The story was loosely based on the Poseidon bubble —

That is described as —

a nickel boom in Western Australia in the late 1960s, and tells of an outback pub owner who stakes a claim and finds herself an overnight millionaire.

It is a fascinating plot. It talks about how she is befriended by a hippie, Claude Fitzherbert, who follows her character, Meg, into the Perth high society. As I recently described, Meg was the widowed owner of a pub in a small desert town in Western Australia. A corrupt American mining executive called Ed Benson—with a name like that —

Mr D.A. Templeman: Who played Ed?

Mr R.H. COOK: I will come to the various players shortly, Leader of the House. The Wikipedia entry continues —

Ed Benson starts the rumour of a nickel discovery to sell shares to gullible investors. Meg heads the rumour and stakes the first claim. Benson promotes her as the “Nickel Queen”.

In this context, Acting Speaker, you are Googie Withers’ character, Meg.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.E. Kent): Wow. I am so thrilled. Let *Hansard* record that!

Mr R.H. COOK: A hippie by the name of Claude Fitzherbert follows Meg into Perth high society and becomes her lover. Benson, however, is exposed as a fraud. In the meantime, Fitzherbert deserts Meg and runs off with Benson’s wife, and Meg is reunited with her old suitor in her home town. All is well that ends well. As I said, it was an extraordinary cast, with Googie Withers playing Meg Blake. Claude Fitzherbert, the hippie, was played by none other than John Laws. I never knew he had an acting career!

Mr D.A. Templeman: Was it short-lived, like the film?

Mr R.H. COOK: There are other notable characters. One character, Harry Philips, was played by Ed Devereaux. Ed Devereaux has one of those faces that speaks of fatherly authority, because, of course, he was the father in *Skippy*.

Mr D.A. Templeman: They did scrape the barrel, didn’t they?

Mr R.H. COOK: It is funny you should mention that, Leader of the House, because the barrel got scraped particularly hard in this film! In the cast listed by Wikipedia, which provides us with an authority on the film *Nickel Queen*, we have three characters of particular interest to the Parliament. One was none other than Sir David Brand, who put in an appearance as himself. Another was Sir Charles Court. I never knew he had an acting career. Sir Charles Court was a musician. I think he was a trumpet player.

Mr D.A. Templeman: He was.

Mr R.H. COOK: Yes. One of the things I always admired about Sir Charles Court—of course, being on this side of the chamber, there were a few things—is that he was a stalwart of the Musicians’ Union of Australia.

Mr D.A. Templeman: He was. Mind you, he would have been hard to direct. I don’t think he would have taken many directions.

Mr R.H. COOK: From a conductor?

Mr D.A. Templeman: From a director!

Mr R.H. COOK: The member for Cottesloe observed that part of the film was filmed in whose house?

Dr D.J. Honey: Max Evans’ house in Mosman Park.

Mr R.H. COOK: Max Evans’ house, yes. There was also an Arthur Griffin, whom I think the Leader of the House identified as an upper house member; is that correct?

Mr D.A. Templeman: No, but it’s a good story.

Mr R.H. COOK: There was a chap called Arthur Griffin who played himself, as well, I assume alongside Sir David Brand and Sir Charles Court, who made cameos in the *Nickel Queen*.

Ms M.J. Hammat: Is that why they got knighthoods, for their acting?

Mr R.H. COOK: I am not sure it was for their acting. It is not like Sir Sean Connery!

Mr D.A. Templeman: We need to make a sequel!

Mr R.H. COOK: It is interesting. It would appear that with the turn of events here tonight as we continue the passage of this bill, we usher in a new chapter for Poseidon, and we very much look forward to every success as the company goes about continuing to advance this project.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I will get on to Screenwest immediately. There's a story here! It will feature at CinefestOZ 2022!

Mr R.H. COOK: Starring Dave Templeman! Funded by Dave Templeman! Every scene involving Dave Templeman!

Mr D.A. Templeman: Behind the bar, walking the street—I can see it now!

Mr R.H. COOK: Acting Speaker, in closing off the debate, I thank members for their contributions, even the hot air that came from the Leader of the House in the earlier contribution from the member for Wanneroo! We look forward to this being an ongoing and successful mining project. I understand that some members would like to go to consideration in detail to tease out some aspects of this legislation. Other than that, I thank members for their contributions and all sides of the chamber for their support for this bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave denied to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

House adjourned at 8.55 pm
