



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTIETH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2020

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 9 September 2020

Legislative Assembly

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THE SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson) took the chair at 12 noon, acknowledged country and read prayers.

FRACKING — GINGIN

Petition

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Nationals WA) [12.01 pm]: I have a petition that has been certified by the Clerks, bearing 364 signatures, couched in the following terms —

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

We the undersigned express our deep concern that fracking is being planned within the Gingin Shire. This shire is a significant food growing area, producing 40% of produce for Perth. The risk of contamination and destruction to our precious water resources and the loss of the huge food production that would result from fracking must not be permitted.

Now we ask the Legislative Assembly to ban fracking in the Gingin Shire.

[See petition 188.]

ROAD SIGNAGE

Petition

MR V.A. CATANIA (North West Central) [12.02 pm]: I have a petition that has been certified by the Clerks, bearing 403 signatures, couched in the following terms —

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

Petition into Road Signage in Western Australia

We, the undersigned, are concerned about road signage requirements being upheld and adhered to, creating unsafe road conditions, particularly in regional and remote WA. We therefore ask the Legislative Assembly to examine the following concerns by the way of a bi-partisan parliamentary committee, including but not limited to the following:

- Ensuring that Main Roads WA policies and procedures regarding road signage are adhered to, no matter how remote the road,
- Ensuring that adequate warning is provided leading into road works or any changed road conditions,
- Reviewing Main Roads WA procedures for work undertaken by Main Roads WA and its contractors to ensure road signage is safe and adequate,
- Recommending changes and amendments to Main Roads WA procedures to ensure safe signage practices particularly in regional areas.

[See petition 189.]

PAPERS TABLED

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

POLICE — BODY ARMOUR PROJECT

Statement by Minister for Police

MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland — Minister for Police) [12.04 pm]: It is with some pride that I inform the house of a significant milestone in the personal issue of new body armour to Western Australia's police officers. The 5 000th police officer was recently measured for the issue of their own body armour in the rollout of this \$19.2 million initiative to provide modern protective equipment for our frontline police. The measuring program is some two months ahead of schedule, notwithstanding the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, and is close to completion amongst all of the operational workforce. Senior armour fitter Ethne Moller and Inspector Brett Baddock are among the officers to be congratulated for their tireless work on the rollout.

The body armour project transforms the protective equipment provided to support and protect all our frontline police, with the personal-issue body armour kits receiving very positive feedback. The multi-threat body armour vests are designed to offer significant resistance to sharp objects and bladed weapons, along with protection against firearm threats. The kits include a trauma pouch, used to treat casualties, which is designed to attach to body armour overt carriers or utility belts. The trauma pouch recently proved invaluable when officers responded to a call of

attempted suicide in bushland in Anketell. The attending officers located the person bleeding severely, and used their body armour trauma kits to control the bleeding. Their new OneForce Locate mobile phone location application was also used to direct other officers and paramedics to their location.

This milestone is a massive leap forward from when the body armour project was just a 2015 trial to nowhere, with no plan and no money on budget from the Barnett–Harvey government. With the personal issue of state-of-the-art body armour, the McGowan government is delivering on our commitment to provide WA’s police officers with the best protective equipment possible when they turn out to protect us in the community.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT — GENDER EQUALITY — COUNCILLOR ELIZABETH CLAPHAM

Statement by Minister for Local Government

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Local Government) [12.06 pm]: Last week I was honoured to attend a local government event that celebrated 100 years since the first woman was elected to local government in Western Australia. Councillor Elizabeth Clapham was, in 1920, the first woman elected to local government, and served one term at the Town of Cottesloe from 1920 to 1922. Cr Clapham was the first woman elected to any tier of government in Western Australia, with Edith Cowan elected to state government the following year, 1921. The amendment of the Municipal Corporations Act to remove the words “no female” from the list of persons excluded from becoming municipal councillors allowed this to happen. In 1926, Elizabeth Clapham also became the first female Inspector of Factories; she was a delegate to the International Woman Suffrage Alliance Congress in Rome in 1923, and represented the Women’s Service Guild at a conference of the British Commonwealth League in London in 1931.

On Friday, 28 August, I attended a centenary celebration of the anniversary of the election of Cr Elizabeth Clapham, hosted by the Australian Local Government Women’s Association, WA branch, and I would like to thank Cr Karen Wheatland, the president, for her drive and passion in celebrating Cr Clapham and her achievements.

After the 2019 local government elections, Western Australia saw the number of women councillors increase by 22 per cent. Our state is currently ranked second overall for the ratio of women to men councillors. Whilst this is a fantastic result, we can and must do better. The McGowan government is working hard to ensure that this positive trend continues. It is our commitment to address gender inequity in Western Australia, and we recently released “Stronger Together — WA’s Plan for Gender Equality”.

Since the 2019 elections, the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries has partnered with the University of Western Australia and the Western Australian Local Government Association to undertake research through the Hands Up project to improve this, and to establish benchmark data on elected members and nominated members in local government in Western Australia.

PREPAID FUNERAL INDUSTRY — CODE OF PRACTICE

Statement by Minister for Seniors and Ageing

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston — Minister for Seniors and Ageing) [12.09 pm]: I rise today to welcome the introduction of the McGowan government’s mandatory code of practice for Western Australia’s prepaid funeral industry, which will come into force on 1 March 2021. For the first time in Western Australia, the new code will give seniors and their families confidence in the security and value of their prepaid funeral plans. Pre-planning a funeral enables us to choose how our life will be celebrated and to plan for the expense of funeral arrangements. It also promises to spare our loved ones the financial burden of paying for a funeral.

When prepaying funeral plans, older Western Australians place their trust and their savings in funeral directors and other funeral service providers. It is estimated that \$170 million is currently being held over in WA to pay for future funerals, with that amount expected to grow rapidly as our population ages. Older Western Australians put their trust in the fact that these funds will be protected, that they will get a fair deal and that they are doing the right thing for their families by being prepared. This, however, has not always been the case, as I have experienced myself. Although prepaid Western Australian funeral sellers have in place voluntary standards, without a mandatory code of practice the funds of older Western Australians can potentially be placed in insecure investments and left unprotected from cost increases and inflation. Contracts have also been open to ambiguity should a provider become insolvent or a client move interstate or pass away before full payment is made. In my own family’s experience, my mother was always a forward thinker and she organised and prepaid her funeral plan. When the time came, however, the plan’s value did not cover half of what it had promised and, in the end, the planned service was nearly double the amount of the prepaid fund.

The code will give greater clarity and certainty surrounding what will be delivered from a prepaid funeral contract, with all goods and services to be outlined, along with the cost of each component and any fees clearly indicated. The agreed-upon price will be fixed at the time of signing to ensure that the client’s funds are immune from cost increases and inflation over time, with the requirement that money be placed within secure investments under the name of the client.

I commend the government and my cabinet colleague Hon John Quigley, MLA, Minister for Commerce, for the work that has been done over the past few years to develop the new code, which will give peace of mind to many older Western Australians and their families.

RACING INDUSTRY — RACING AND WAGERING WESTERN AUSTRALIA FUNDING

Statement by Minister for Racing and Gaming

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Racing and Gaming) [12.11 pm]: I rise to briefly inform the house about a significant announcement made today by Racing and Wagering Western Australia, the state's principal racing authority, which is providing a \$16 million increase in funding to the racing industry for the 2020–21 season. The racing industry is an important industry to our state. It contributes approximately \$821 million to the Western Australian economy, employs more than 7 360 people across the state and supports an industry of more than 24 000 participants. However, as the house would be aware, the WA racing industry has faced significant challenges over the past few months as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. RWWA, the statutory body responsible for fostering the development of all three racing codes in the state, has provided effective leadership and guidance, with the assistance of government, by providing prompt advice to the industry and by addressing the challenges faced by participants during these unprecedented times. RWWA continues to support the industry through these uncertain times and, today, announced an increase of \$16 million in funding to the industry for the 2020–21 season. This commitment will provide a total of \$180 million in distribution grants and subsidies directly to WA racing participants, as well as an additional \$2.3 million towards animal welfare and a digital platform to benefit the industry. The increase in funding also includes \$8 million towards infrastructure grants to support critical projects at race clubs across the state. Owners will receive increased prize money for greyhounds and thoroughbreds, with breeding bonuses also being provided for harness racing. In line with RWWA's commitment to ensure that the best level of care is provided to animals in the racing industry through all stages of their lives, 22 per cent of the increase, or \$1.37 million, will be allocated to progress greyhound and equine welfare initiatives. Finally, \$1 million will be used for the development of a digital program to promote the state's racing product. This funding represents RWWA's support for continuing to develop all three codes of racing in WA and will help to encourage greater confidence for WA racing participants to continue to invest in the industry.

SHARKS — HAZARD MITIGATION — HELICOPTER PATROLS

Statement by Minister for Fisheries

MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee — Minister for Fisheries) [12.14 pm]: The McGowan government is focused on keeping beachgoers safe as the weather warms up and more Western Australians holiday at home this year. The state-funded helicopter beach patrols commenced as we moved into spring and the rollout of beach emergency number signs will continue along the state's coast. These two safety initiatives are key planks of the government's shark mitigation strategy—the most comprehensive approach to preventing and responding to shark attacks in the country and in this state's history. The McGowan government has allocated \$7.78 million to continue seasonal helicopter patrols for the next two years over Perth and south west beaches. The patrols, run by Surf Life Saving WA, will be in the air from 5 September 2020 until 30 April 2021. Metropolitan patrols will kick off with extensive weekend surveillance during September and move to daily patrols from 28 September 2020 through to 30 April 2021. South west patrols will run daily during the school holidays and peak periods, and will fly at all other times on the weekends and public holidays.

In 2019–20, a record 1 040 patrol hours were logged, covering approximately 115 000 kilometres of the Western Australian coast from Yanchep to Mandurah, including Rottnest Island, and south from Bunbury to Hamelin Bay. Patrols reported 501 shark sightings and beaches were closed 50 times as a precaution. The BEN sign program, a McGowan government initiative that started in December 2017, recently reached a significant milestone with the 1 000th sign going in the ground in the City of Wanneroo. Each BEN sign has a unique code to pinpoint the exact location of the beach and to improve crucial emergency response times for a range of potentially serious incidents such as surfing injuries or shark incidents. Since 2018, BEN signs have been used more than 500 times in pinpointing the location of people who have required emergency assistance via 000 calls.

PUBLIC SECTOR — GENDER EQUALITY

Statement by Minister for Women's Interests

MS S.F. MCGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Women's Interests) [12.16 pm]: I rise to update the house on women in leadership in the public sector in Western Australia. The public sector is one of the largest workforces in our state and women make up 72 per cent of its ranks. Despite the workforce being overwhelmingly female, women have been consistently under-represented in the senior executive service across the public sector. When we came into government, only 34 per cent of the senior executive service were women. Today, I am pleased to tell the house that as at March 2020, women now make up 42.5 per cent of the senior executive service. This is a significant milestone, which has only been achieved by sustained and committed action. One of the key initiatives of the "Stronger Together — WA's Plan for Gender Equality" is a target of 50 per cent women in the senior executive service. I am proud that we are on track to achieving this goal as early as 2022. This is an incredible turnaround as just two years ago we were looking at not reaching parity until 2035.

We often talk about WA having the worst gender pay gap in the nation. This government is leading action to close that gender gap by starting in our own backyard. We have a lot of work ahead of us to progress gender equality,

but I am proud to be part of a government that is taking real action and delivering real outcomes. Government alone cannot solve gender inequality; however, it is important that we provide real leadership to the rest of our community. More diversity throughout our workplaces will improve productivity, performance and capability of all staff. We want all organisations—private business, government, community services—to draw on the full talent pool that is available to us. I am proud of the work that we are progressing as a government. I commend all the people in our community who are working together to make gender equality a reality so that WA is a place where every child can reach their potential.

COVID-19 RESPONSE AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY OMNIBUS BILL 2020

Returned

Bill returned from the Council with amendments.

Council's Amendments — Consideration in Detail

The amendments made by the Council were as follows —

No. 1

Clause 13, page 9, line 10 — To delete the line.

No. 2

Clause 14, page 9, lines 11 to 16 — To delete the clause.

No. 3

Clause 15, page 9, line 23 — To delete the line.

No. 4

Clause 16, page 10, line 13 — To delete the line.

No. 5

Clause 17, page 10, line 22 — To delete the line.

No. 6

Clause 20, page 12, line 25 — To delete the line.

No. 7

Clause 30, page 19, line 6 — To delete “section 3; and” and substitute —
section 3(a) or (b); and

No. 8

Clause 31, page 23, line 4 — To delete “section 3.” and substitute —
section 3(a) or (b).

No. 9

Long Title, page 1, line 13 — To delete “**immediately before**,”.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI — by leave: I move —

That the amendments made by the Council be agreed to.

I want to thank the other place for passing this bill. Only two members opposed it, Hon Aaron Stonehouse and Hon Simon O'Brien. I understand that the bill went through its normal process in the other place. However, some members believed that at that moment in time it was far more important to grandstand than to pass necessary legislation for the functioning of the state and to help us respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Special thanks to the National Party, which considered this bill seriously and did not feel the need to grandstand on this issue.

I thank all the instructing officers from the various agencies, of which there are many, and parliamentary counsel, for what has been not only a complicated drafting exercise, but also one that involved a lot of people being here at Parliament at times of night when they would probably have preferred to be at home, and long hours sitting around waiting for the other place in particular. I thank all the advisers. I also thank my staff. My staff were very pleasant to the opposition. However, the opposition took advantage of that and created a political circus.

We have learned a lot through this process. We have learned that we cannot consult constructively with the opposition. People have said to me, “Never trust them, Rita.” I will not tell members opposite who keeps telling me that I should not trust the opposition.

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Each time they have said that, I have said, “Do you know what? It seems as though they are acting in good faith, they want to be constructive, and they want to go on the journey with us on this legislation.” However, it is clear that those people who keep saying that we should not trust the opposition are 100 per cent correct.

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: When the member for Bateman was a minister, I do not remember his staff giving me their direct telephone number and proactively engaging on legislation. I do not remember that. I do not believe the member for Bateman ever gave me access to his staff. His staff did not email me at all hours and on the weekends to make sure that I was comfortable with the legislation and I knew the process. I do not recall that ever happening from any staff member of the former government.

It has been demonstrated once again by particular members of the upper house, who have nothing to do apart from organising preselections —

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: They do have something to do—they run the party and organise preselections.

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: They are active in certain communities. That is what they do. I do not see them ever wanting to take this state forward. As I said, we trusted the opposition. I remember the Planning and Development Amendment Bill. The opposition said how dare we give it a copy of the bill after we have introduced it, and not before. That is despite the fact that the normal course of business is that we give the opposition a bill only after we have introduced it. It is all about the other house. Therefore, this time, we gave the opposition an early concept of the bill so that we could see how we could work together to get this package of legislation through. No final decisions had been made. We just wanted to have a constructive and collaborative process. However, the opposition chose to play absolute politics. They chose to name and attack my staff member—something I have never done to the opposition. As I said, we have tried to be constructive on this bill. However, we have all learned that we should never trust the opposition and we should never work with the opposition, particularly in the upper house, because it abuses any trust that we give it.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Given that we are now in a debate —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms J.M. Freeman): We are not in a debate. The minister has made a number of observations. Perhaps you would like to consider the amendments in detail.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I would expect that we would go through this in a relatively collaborative fashion, as the opposition tends to do, particularly when it comes to matters COVID-19. I remind the minister that the Liberal Party has agreed to every piece of the government’s priority COVID legislation, as tenuous as that legislation might have been from time to time, simply because it had the word “COVID-19” in the short or long title. The opposition has been continually accommodating to the government, no matter the circumstances in which we have found ourselves and the short notice we have been given.

We have seen some extraordinary behaviour on the part of the government. At one time, the government flagged legislation that contained a Henry VIII clause. A whole part of that legislation was devoted to empowering the Premier during this state of emergency. That clause was extraordinary in its overreach. The minister went on to suggest that somehow —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms J.M. Freeman): Member for Dawesville, we have advisers in the chamber. I understand that you want to respond to an issue, but let us focus on the question, and I will give you an opportunity to respond. How about we focus on the fact that we have two advisers sitting in the chamber?

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Of course. I value the time that all people have contributed to this legislation, most importantly the Liberal Party members in the upper house, who continue to do a fantastic job of the review functions that they undertake.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister, I gave you the rope, let us not continue to —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Yes. Member for Dawesville.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: To be perfectly frank, I expected that this would be a relatively easy process, but, of course, we now find ourselves with the appetite to go through the amendments line by line. I think we might do that, if that is okay. With that in mind, amendment 1, which the government did not agree to, deals with the reference to “a prescribed enactment”. I am keen to understand why the government did not support this amendment and why we find it in this place.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: This amendment is to restrict the act. It will remove clause 13(4)(i), which refers to “a prescribed enactment”. If we need another piece of legislation, we cannot use that subclause, so we would have to bring in an amendment to the legislation, and that would limit our power to respond to a pandemic.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: The government is accepting amendment 1 in this place because it limits the government's ability to respond to a pandemic.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No. It is because the Liberal Party wants to play politics with a pandemic in the upper house. That is why.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Dawesville, this is fun.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I enjoy standing up and sitting down. It gives you a good quad work out.

Can the minister explain perhaps how it limits the government's ability to respond to a pandemic?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: If we discover that we require an act that is not listed in the legislation, we would have to somehow, during a pandemic, bring in more legislation to amend the act.

Dr D.J. Honey: There are no infections in the state.

The ACTING SPEAKER: That is not helpful, member for Cottesloe. That is now in *Hansard*, so shush!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Liberal Party again dismisses the importance of having a pandemic in the state. As I said, the Liberal Party wanted to play politics in the upper house. We do not have the numbers in the upper house, so we have to accept some of the Liberal Party's amendments; that is what happens. All I can do is ask the member for Dawesville whether his preselection is under threat. Is that why he has to sit in this chamber and be the mouthpiece for some of the members in the upper house, because that is not normally the case in this place?

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: To be clear, minister, in the event of this reference being removed, the government would have to otherwise ensure that it goes through the legislative process to bring in to this place further legislation during a pandemic, which the government has already done 12 times, supported by the opposition and expeditiously ushered through both houses. Is the minister saying that because we will limit the clause, the government would have otherwise had the ability to introduce writ large any other legislation it saw fit, but would now have to go through a separate legislative process to ensure there is appropriate review and oversight by the Parliament? Does the government not agree with that?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No, we do not. There was appropriate governance; it was going to be through regulation.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: We would not have seen the regulations; is that right?

Ms R. Saffioti: Where are the strings?

The ACTING SPEAKER: We are on to amendment 2, which states —

Clause 14, page 9, lines 11 to 16 — To delete the clause.

Does the member for Dawesville want to go through this amendment line by line or can I put the question that amendments 1 to 9 be agreed to?

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Thank you very much, Acting Speaker. Indeed, I look forward to continuing to explore the amendments with the minister.

Could the minister explain why lines 11 to 16 of clause 14 on page 9 are to be deleted?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Again, it is because the Liberal Party in the other place wanted to play politics with a pandemic. We thought the clause was reasonable, but to ensure support for the passage of the bill, we agreed to it.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Could the minister clarify that in the Legislative Council the government agreed to this amendment but not the previous amendment? The government has now agreed to amendment 2 in this chamber and in the other place.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I said we agreed to it.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: In the upper house as well?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: In that case, for some clarity on the government's position on this amendment, why did the government not agree with the deletion of clause 13, but agree with the deletion of clause 14? How is that reconciled?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We could compromise on the deletion of clause 14. We had to accept the compromise on clause 13. That is the art of getting legislation through Parliament, especially when we do not have the numbers and the Liberal Party wants to play politics with a pandemic. Sometimes we have to compromise. As I said, the Liberal Party has played politics with a pandemic at every corner and will continue to, and here we are now.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I would hate to draw the minister's attention to the fact that I believe it was her opening statement that created the situation in this place.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I would hate to remind the member for Dawesville that he would not have this opportunity had I not ruled the way that I did, so let us move through the amendments.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: The Acting Speaker is very generous.

Could the minister confirm that the nine amendments we have before us were not all moved by the Liberal Party, which of course has only nine of the 36 members in the Legislative Council, and that amendments were moved by members of other parties in the other place?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Which ones were they, minister?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: They are on the notice paper.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: To clarify, the question was which of the nine amendments were moved by parties other than the Liberal Party?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member should ask the puppetmasters in the upper house.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Acting Speaker, I think there is a reflection, or an imputation, on members of the Legislative Council, which I believe is against standing orders, and I ask the minister to withdraw.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I am not going to ask her to withdraw. I put this motion before. The member for Dawesville had an opportunity to go into consideration in detail on these amendments. We have two advisers here. The member was sitting in his chair when I put the motion and he allowed it to pass. We have an opportunity to have this debate in a manner that will move us through, so can we make that happen, member for Dawesville? I am sitting here and watching the debate, so think about that.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Thank you very much, Acting Speaker. In that case, I will have to go through and reflect on which parties moved these amendments. Of course, I appreciate that the government is agreeing to amendment 2 so we will move through.

The ACTING SPEAKER: The next amendment is —

Clause 15, page 9, line 23 — To delete the line.

The question is that amendments 1 to 9 be agreed to.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: We are now on to the deletion of line 23 of clause 15 on page 9, which I believe is the reference to “a prescribed enactment”. I believe that applies to clauses 15, 16, 17 and 20, which are amendments 3, 4, 5 and 6, as I am advised by the member for Carine. I assume this relates to the same answer the minister gave earlier that removing this reference means that the government would have to bring in separate legislation to respond to a pandemic if it found that other issues had arisen.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: In that case, I do not quite understand the need; why was that such an issue and why was the amendment opposed? I think the government opposed amendments 3, 4, 5 and 6 in the other place. I fail to see how having to bring in to Parliament separate legislation, if other matters are identified, is problematic. It has happened 12 or 13 times thus far. Why is this such a concern for the government? Why would the government oppose such a measure?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We have outlined it before. During a pandemic, we want the ability to respond to a crisis. The member may have different thoughts from the government, but the government should be empowered to respond to a crisis, and this gave it some ability to —

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Carine!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Liberal Party, as I said, has played politics with this pandemic —

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Carine, I call you to order for the first time.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Liberal Party has played politics with this from day one and it continues to do so. Advice from the legal teams, the State Solicitor’s Office and all the agencies has been that any state government should have the ability to prescribe other legislation through regulations. There was an oversight capacity that did not satisfy the members of the upper house, so here we are. As I said, to get legislation through, we have to compromise and that is what we did.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Does the minister have an understanding or anticipation about other legislation or other responses the government might have to bring about if such a situation arose?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Not at this stage.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Effectively, the removal of this line ensures that there is appropriate parliamentary oversight during the state of emergency. Is that correct?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No. The Liberal Party has again completely undermined the government's ability to respond to a pandemic, like it did when it called for the hard borders to be removed, completely undermining the government's handling of a pandemic situation.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Parliamentary oversight is an important practice that we are all assembled here today to deal with. I find it fascinating that the government would not want to ensure that there was appropriate review of any legislation that it would bring about in this place. It is a significant concern to all of us that if the government is so resistant to agreeing with the amendments in the Legislative Council, which we are dealing with today, yet it finds itself agreeing with them in this chamber, where it has a vast majority, clearly, it is rushing through legislation that would have otherwise given it superpowers to respond to the pandemic. Now, because we have to go back to the process and back to our parliamentary democracy, which has underpinned the very foundations of our state since responsible government, I do not see why the government of the day would have such an issue with that, unless there was something else to hide. I do not know. What other motivation is there that the Premier and his cabinet could have?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member for Dawesville is showing himself to be a great apprentice of Nick Goiran in the upper house. We know he holds the power and that he has sent the member for Dawesville to come in to show his leadership credentials. Obviously, I will sit here and watch it and maybe his colleagues will watch it too and think, "Hang on, maybe we should back this guy for leader."

Point of Order

Dr D.J. HONEY: Point of order.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms J.M. Freeman): Points of order will be heard in silence.

Dr D.J. HONEY: The minister is supposed to be responding to a question and instead we are getting a political diatribe. I think this is completely inappropriate and completely off the topic. The member for Dawesville is being lectured to.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Point of order!

Dr D.J. HONEY: I am on my feet.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Sit down! I will listen to the point of order in silence.

Dr D.J. HONEY: The member for Dawesville has been instructed to stick strictly to the topic, but the minister simply is not.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Cottesloe, thank you very much. It is not a point of order. I can understand that you are upset. Does the Leader of the House have a point of order? I will take that as a response. Let us move on.

Debate Resumed

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: In that case, we are now moving to the amendment of clause 16—the deletion of "a prescribed enactment" at page 10, line 13. Can the minister confirm that and again confirm why it is the government's intent to oppose such an amendment in the upper house and why it is agreeing to it in the lower house?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We want to get this legislation through because it will help the government respond to a pandemic and prepare us to respond to a pandemic in the future. It is a compromise, because the Liberal Party has played politics with this pandemic from day one.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Thank you, minister, for the response.

Ms R. Saffioti: They'd be happy with you.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Is the minister happy with me?

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Shoosh, both of you. Leader of the House, speak again and I will call you.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: The effect again throughout this, which I do not quite understand, is why the government opposed this in the other place. I remind the minister that our party has nine members in the Legislative Council and, except for the Labor Party, all 36 members of the Legislative Council agreed to this amendment. Why does the Labor Party have such an aversion to transparency and accountability to the Parliament?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Liberal Party has tried to play politics with the pandemic from day one. It has never trusted the government to handle a pandemic. It has questioned all the decisions; for example, it repeatedly called for us to bring the borders down.

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Carine!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The idea —

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: How is that high school that you have basically misled the public about, member for Carine? How is that?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Come on, minister.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Well, he was talking about trust.

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Carine, take out your standing orders, open it to page 48, look at standing order 83 and have a think about that for a little while before I call you again, okay?

Mr A. Krsticevic: I need a copy.

The ACTING SPEAKER: You will get a copy. Look at page 48, standing order 83. Thank you, member for Carine.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: In response to that point, it appears that the Liberal Party wants to be involved in every decision made during the pandemic. Let us go through that. If the Liberal Party was involved in all decision-making, the border would be down and there would be community spread. That is the reality. That is what the member is putting to me—that the party that was on television and in this chamber begging for the borders to come down should be involved in every part of that decision-making. The Liberal Party has demonstrated it is not fit to be part of that decision-making. Regarding this deleted line, it was all about good government and making sure a government can make key decisions.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Of course, I have to entirely disagree with the minister. If the government had paid attention to the Liberal Party, it would have closed the borders sooner, because only the Liberal Party called for the borders to be closed in the first place.

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Point of order —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms J.M. Freeman): Leader of the House, I call you to order for the first time. You were warned. Members, can I remind you that we are at the consideration in detail stage on the consideration of these amendments. This is not a general debate. Can we get back to the debate on the amendments please.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: There was a point of order. The member is clearly misleading the chamber on this issue.

The ACTING SPEAKER: There is no point of order, minister.

Debate Resumed

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I remind the minister that this amendment happens to deal with this clause, in particular, to transparency and accountability. If we want to talk about transparent decision-making, only the Liberal Party called for the borders to be closed in the first instance.

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: That is the appropriate record here; that is the truth, member for Belmont. If the Labor Party continues to ignore the truth, reject the reality and substitute it for its own, that is what we are going to be faced with in this place. It continues to find itself at odds with the truth. It continues to find itself trying its best to add as much political spin as it can.

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Belmont, shoosh.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: That is why in the other place all parties except the Labor Party sought to agree to this amendment. I am surprised the government rejects transparency and accountability in such a concerning manner.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Interesting fact: who is the other person in Australia running that line about the hard border? It is Clive Palmer. Clive Palmer and the member for Dawesville are on a unity ticket with that claim, because Clive Palmer is running that in his ads. Did the member for Dawesville write those ads for Clive Palmer? They are exactly the ads that Clive Palmer is using. The Liberal Party sided with Clive Palmer, it sided with the federal Liberal Party and it wanted those borders down. That is the Liberal Party and that is how the Liberal Party would have handled the pandemic in this state.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I appreciate the Acting Speaker giving the minister an opportunity to talk about Clive Palmer, so, of course, I expect to be given the opportunity to respond with similar leniency. Of course, the minister is wrong in this case. Of course, what she said is not the case. The Liberal Party has nothing to do with Clive Palmer whatsoever. It is nothing but spin and unsubstantiated claims by this minister in this place.

This clause sought to deal with an important level of transparency and accountability to ensure that, if needed, Parliament would have the appropriate opportunity to see the government's intent with legislation, and to scrutinise it appropriately.

Ms R. Saffioti: You met with Clive Palmer.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Never in my life. Importantly, this is the type of spin that we get from —

Ms R. Saffioti: You're sure?

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Absolutely. This is the type of spin that we get from the government every single day of the week. It likes to imagine —

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms J.M. Freeman): Minister! Member for Cottesloe, would you like to be called?

Dr D.J. Honey: No.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: In any case, I look forward to this amendment being put and the government agreeing to it.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I will make a brief point. I think we are at the very end of this conversation. Obviously, the discussion has not been about each amendment all the way through. A few interesting discussions took place in the other place. I believe that in the end, the debate was guillotined; it ended quite abruptly. However, I enjoyed watching some of the discussions and I thought that the contribution of Legislative Council members should be appreciated for undertaking the task of—at least Nationals WA members did—diligently going through the legislation line by line, as they are required to do, to make necessary amendments to ensure that there were no unforeseen mistakes. A couple of mistakes were detected, and one of these amendments is a tidy up of an error in the legislation. That is part of the role of the Legislative Council. That process takes time. I do not agree that every debate and every discussion that takes place in the Council is designed to hold up the government or to be obtuse. Council members undertake their task diligently, and I place on record my support for the National Party members in the other place and the contribution they make to legislation in Parliament.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Amendment 5 states —

Clause 17, page 10, line 22 — To delete the line.

I believe this deals with “prescribed enactment”. I ask the minister: why did the government disagree with it in the Legislative Council but finds itself agreeing with the amendment here?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Liberal Party wants to play politics with the pandemic. Again, agreeing to this amendment allows the government to handle these situations in a faster process. The Liberal Party wanted to bring the borders down; it now wants to change the legislation. We do not have the numbers in the upper house, so I think we stayed silent on the vote or voted against the amendment. Now, we amend the bill in the lower house because we need the legislation.

As I said, if the member for Dawesville is wanting to shore up his preselection, he is doing a very good job for Hon Nick Goiran.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: We find ourselves in a state of emergency here in Western Australia with extraordinary powers granted to the WA Police Force and the Chief Health Officer —

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Dawesville, are you still on amendment 5?

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Indeed, I am, Acting Speaker. I am specifically on clause 17, page 10, line 22, and “prescribed enactment”. The inclusion of those words would have given the government an open book to do what it likes in introducing new laws into the state without parliamentary oversight, which, of course, would be cause for concern for any elected member in this place who has sworn the oath to serve the people of Western Australia. Given that we are in a state of emergency, I would be concerned by the inclusion of those words with the extraordinary powers already granted to police and the Chief Health Officer with which the entire city could be locked down and people's behaviour directed. What other legislation or powers did the government have in mind when it sought to include “prescribed enactment” in the first instance? If this provision had stayed in the bill, what other secret laws would the government seek to bring about? If this provision had stayed and the upper house had not voted together with every single party except the Labor Party to knock out this “prescribed enactment” provision, what other restrictions on people's freedoms would the government seek to bring about? What other plans are there, minister? Tell us now. The minister is part of cabinet. What other secret powers or plans does the government have to restrict the freedoms of the people of Western Australia?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Dawesville! Minister, of those questions, all you have to answer are the ones referring to clause 17, page 10, line 22. You do not have to answer the hypothetical questions.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: This is the opposition that wanted to bring the borders down. The Leader of the Opposition was calling on us to let Clive Palmer in. Do members remember that? Why do we not let Clive Palmer in? That is what the Leader of the Opposition was saying: Why are we not letting Clive Palmer in? Why do we have hard borders? This is from the Liberal Party that does secret preference deals with Clive Palmer time and time again. Liberal Party members got in federally as a result of Clive Palmer's advertising campaign. Secret deals? The

Liberal Party should tell us why it is running the same lines as Clive Palmer's ads. Why is it that the exact words that Clive Palmer uses in his ads are being repeated by the member for Dawesville in this chamber today? He is repeating exactly the same lines.

We know that Hon Nick Goiran controls the Liberal Party. The poor member for Bateman is sat out on the side benches over there because he does not follow what the "real" leader of the Liberal Party says every day, so he is left right out. The member for Dawesville is in here trying to prove himself up as the next leader; that is what he is doing. I am sure that Hon Nick Goiran is sitting there saying, "I'm so proud of him. Look at him; I'm so proud of him. He's playing politics with a pandemic. He's arguing against sensible government. It's exactly what I've taught this young one to do." That is what has happened in the Liberal Party.

Point of Order

Dr D.J. HONEY: I draw the Acting Speaker's attention to standing order 94, which states —

- (1) A member's speech must be relevant to the question under discussion.

The speech, or diatribe, is nothing whatsoever to do with the point that is under discussion.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms J.M. Freeman): There is no point of order.

Debate Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: This is the member for Cottesloe who at the opening of One Subiaco was enjoying sitting in the front row of a new multi-unit development in Subiaco by developers he has named in this place. That is the member for Cottesloe.

In relation to this debate, as I said, I say thank you to the Nationals for their constructive work in the other place. I thank all my advisers for their patience regarding what happened in the other place. As I said, the abuse of the goodwill that we showed in working with the Liberal Party is something that I will never forget—and the fact that we were trying to work collaboratively with the Liberal Party.

As I said, if this is the member for Dawesville's interview performance, keep going! I am sure he will be very happy.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I continue with amendment 5. Of course, I entirely refute the minister's assertions that somehow there are some secret deals going on, but we know the high level of secrecy that we continually see orchestrated by this government is absolutely founded in the words to be removed by this amendment.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: It seems to me that the government lets a lot of people into the state inconsistently from time to time, but anyway!

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Footballers' partners is a good start. Nine footballers' wives and girlfriends were allowed. That is something. They were from Victoria. That is unusual. Why bring back five nurses from Western Australia who have COVID-19 when the government will let in footballers' wives! But anyway. That seems a little bit inconsistent.

Ms R. Saffioti: Are you referring to someone who you are too gutless to say?

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I am not too gutless, minister. I will tell you. That is exactly what we are suggesting.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Oh, the minister is very kind!

In any case, we know that the transparency and accountability of this government and the way it operates has gone missing.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: There is no secret deal. The only secrecy is in relation to the powers that the government was going to bring in. Thank God that the upper house knocked out that provision. Every single party except the government party sought to knock out the words in this provision, because obviously in a state of emergency when the Chief Health Officer already has extraordinary powers in directions he can issue to the people of Western Australia, and the extraordinary powers given to the Western Australia Police Force, evidently, there was a deal within the government that it needed more powers. Perhaps those powers would continue to restrict the freedoms of certain individuals and Western Australians. We do not know what those powers will be, because, thankfully, this clause has been knocked out. There is no secret deal, but there are, evidently, secret powers manifesting themselves within cabinet and the government of Western Australia, which was clearly going to bring about some increased restrictions on the liberties and freedoms of the people of Western Australia. It is very concerning. I am glad that the government in this place is agreeing to the deletion, even though it disagreed with it in the upper house.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members, the question is that amendments 1 to 9 be agreed to.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Acting Speaker —

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Dawesville.

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Members cannot speak twice. The member just sat down. He cannot receive the call again.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: We are on the debate, not the actual —

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No. The member cannot ever have two calls in a row.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: Not in consideration in detail —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): Thank you, members; I cannot hear. Yes, the minister is correct. You cannot speak twice on one question. The question is that amendments 1 to 9 be agreed to.

Debate Resumed

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: The minister has made a lot of references to the border and who made what decisions. If the minister went to *WAtoday* and or even *Hansard*, she would see that in early March this year, it was the WA Liberal Party that was calling for the border to be closed. The Premier said that it was a stupid idea. The Treasurer and the Minister for Health said that it was a stupid idea and it was not going to happen. I will quote a *WAtoday* article by Nathan Hondros on 3 August 2020. It says —

It seems like a lifetime ago, but in March when WA Opposition Leader Liza Harvey first proposed closing WA's borders, the idea was rubbished by Premier Mark McGowan and his ministers.

I suggest that the quotes that have been found in the paper were probably taken from *Hansard* and from the Premier's media statements and interviews. Be honest with the people of Western Australia, because the truth is that we were the ones who were calling for the border to be closed. The government refused to do it. At national cabinet, when other states decided to close their borders, that is when the Premier jumped on board. Other people decided to do it first. Then he decided to follow suit.

It is not about trying to mislead the people of Western Australia. Be honest. We both wanted the border to be closed. The government wanted it to be closed at the end of March. We wanted it to be closed at the beginning of March and the government decided to do it when it became politically obvious that everybody else was doing it. We wanted to do it because we were showing leadership to protect the people of Western Australia at that time. There is no point in trying to pretend to win points in this place by misleading the people. It is obvious. Everybody here knows the answer. Do members really think that people in Western Australia are going to read *Hansard* and say, "So, the minister said this, but we know it's not true. She's trying to rewrite history"? Just tell the truth. It is not that big a deal. It is not hard to be honest on this particular point.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Every time the member for Carine gets to his feet, I say, "Thank goodness he is the member for Carine and they did not give that seat to anyone with ability." That is what I think. Every time he stands up, I think, "Thank goodness that blue-ribbon seat has been given to that number-cruncher in the northern suburbs." Thank goodness. I want to quote something from 18 March. The member for Carine referred to the national cabinet. I think out of everyone in Australia, he would be the last person who knows what is going on in national cabinet. Honestly! In referring to the quote from the member for Carine, in case anyone out there reads *Hansard*, this is what the Leader of the Opposition said —

If members go back and check the *Hansard*, they will see that I did not call for travel to stop or borders to be closed ...

That was in March. Then, of course, Liberal members said, "Let Clive Palmer in and let the border come down." That is what they said again and again, and everyone knows that. I know that the member for Churchlands—I have gone through his Facebook posts—never supported it on Facebook and social media because he knew what a stupid position the Leader of the Opposition took. The member for Dawesville is loyal, as we have seen—until it is time not to be loyal, I suspect. The member for Dawesville backed the Leader of the Opposition about bringing down the border and letting Clive Palmer in. I will not go through the Facebook comments that the member for Dawesville referred to, but they were not very positive. The idea that *Hansard* and audio and video recordings do not exist and that nowhere on record do we have the Leader of the Opposition saying that the border should come down is completely false. There is a mountain of information. We did not need to tell people. The community saw it on TV. As I said, the wise member for Churchlands basically said in this chamber that he never repeated what the Leader of the Opposition said. I checked on that just to see whether the member for Churchlands was telling the truth. The member for Churchlands was right; he never echoed what the Leader of the Opposition said. But some did. The current member for Dawesville did—and he is soon to be, I would say, not too well supported by all those constituents.

I would not be so presumptuous, as the member for Dawesville was when he came into this chamber time and again and tried to freak out or embarrass our backbenchers about their margins. Remember that, everybody? The member for Dawesville came into this place —

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It seemed a very long time ago. It was about a year ago, I think. He came into this place, riding the wave of the successful campaign of the federal Liberal Party, which basically won because of Clive Palmer, and does the member for Belmont remember what he did? He went through all the margins and tried to say that members would lose their seats at the next election. I would not be so presumptuous as to do the same in this place, but it is ironic —

Mr D.A. Templeman: It's not in your nature!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No, it is not. It is in my nature to be a lot of things, but not that!

Getting back to the issue, the Liberal Party wanted to bring down the border. Now it is trying to rewrite history. Every time the member for Carine stands up, I say, "Thank goodness the Liberal Party gave us the member for Carine." That seat could have been held by a lot of different people, but it is held by this member for Carine.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): Members, I would like to bring you back to the question, which is that amendments 1 to 9 be agreed to. I understand that we are on clause 17 and line 22 on page 10. It would be good to get this done this afternoon. I am not sure whether the taxpayers are getting value for money out of you at the moment!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I will just draw the minister's attention to a statement made by the Premier in this place on Tuesday, 17 March. I will quote it, given that the member for Carine has rightly pointed out the position of the government on the border. It was made in response to a question asked during question time.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Read the question.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I can take the time, as long as the minister does not jump up on me when I finish it. The question was —

I note the recommendations from the tertiary hospitals medical leads advisory board. Will the Premier immediately support the recommendations of the health experts and doctors on the frontline of the coronavirus fight "by extending isolation restrictions to include all personal interstate travel"?

That is, of course, the way that the medical leads expected a border to be put in place. This was the Premier's response to that question. He referred to raising the issue with the national cabinet, and there is a paragraph on it, but he noted the following —

I want to outline to the house the implications of closing the border with the eastern states. A range of Western Australians need to go east to obtain medical advice and medical attention and have operations and the like. It would impact the supply of important medicines and provisions for Western Australia. It would impact and stop the supply of important goods coming from the east, including a great deal of our fresh food.

This is the bizarre part —

It would disrupt and stop the supply of Kleenex tissues and toilet paper to our supermarkets in Western Australia. It would severely disrupt the mining industry in Western Australia, a number of whose employees live in the east and come to the west. It would disrupt a range of markets that our goods go to in the east because obviously once a truck driver, a train driver or the like take goods to the east, they cannot come home.

Obviously at a personal level, a range of Western Australians might have elderly parents in the east who might be sick or dying and we would be telling those people they cannot see their family members. All I am saying to members is that although it might superficially sound like an easy thing to say or do, there would be severe implications for all Australians and all Western Australians were we to attempt such a measure.

On 17 March, the Premier refused to heed the advice of the opposition and the lead medical teams, which were asking for a hard border to be put in place. That is fact. On 17 March, the Liberal Party and Nationals WA were calling for it. We are dealing with these amendments because, of course, we are dealing with legislation to respond to COVID-19 and the prescribed enactment clause that has been deleted as part of clause 17 on page 10, line 22 seeks to make sure that if the government seeks to introduce further extraordinary powers—secret powers—over the people of Western Australia, there will be a level of parliamentary accountability because we know that this cabinet and government spin their way through as much as possible and mislead the people of Western Australia. The government is using spin to cast the Liberal Party as somehow not being in favour of the hard border when, indeed, we all know that it was the Liberal Party that called for it in the first place and it was the lead medical teams that called for it in the first place and it was this government and this Premier who said that the idea should not be pursued. That is disappointing.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I refer to the comments made on 18 May by the Leader of the Opposition, who stated —

Yesterday, I asked a question of the Premier in response to the tertiary hospitals medical leads advisory board, which had recommended extending isolation restrictions to include all personal interstate travel. That is very different from calling for interstate travel to be banned and borders to be closed, which is actually not what I was calling for at all. If members go back and check the *Hansard* ...

The Leader of the Opposition asked members to go back and check the *Hansard* —

They will see that I did not call for travel to stop or borders to be closed ...

The member for Dawesville's leader said that she did not call for borders to be closed. That is what she said that the day after the statement. The member for Dawesville's leader is on record saying, "I did not call for the borders to be closed." It is clear. She said that she did not call for the borders to be closed but in May she said, "Bring the borders down." That is what happened repeatedly. If the Leader of the Opposition did not say, "Bring the borders down", why did the member for Dawesville reinforce her calls? Of course she said, "Bring the borders down." The member for Dawesville reinforced those calls. I will not read the hundreds of awful comments made about the member for Dawesville when he called for the border to be closed and he supported Clive Palmer, because they are nasty. The community is not stupid—does the member not know that? They saw the member's leader on television time and again. I remember seeing the Leader of the Opposition and, I think, the member for Darling Range outside Dome in Kingsley for a press conference. I watched it live on WAMN news that afternoon. I was interested to see what was happening. The Leader of the Opposition was all over the place. I took a screenshot of some of the comments but I will not refer to them either. The community knows that if the Liberal Party had been in government, it would have brought down the border in May. As soon as one business industry group called for it, it would have done it. Everyone knows that. The Liberal Party and Clive Palmer are trying to run a particular line that no-one is buying. It is dangerous for the Liberal Party to run the same line as Clive Palmer because everyone will share my assumption that the Liberal Party campaign effort and the Clive Palmer campaign effort are centrally driven by the same people because they are very similar. Indeed, they are one and the same in both their language and some of the points that are made. I think I know who is behind it all but I will not mention a name in this place. The Clive Palmer advertisements and the Liberal Party's attempt to rewrite history are very similar and it is dangerous territory for the Liberal Party.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I refer to the sixth amendment, which is to delete line 25 of clause 20, which is a prescribed enactment. Can the minister outline to the house why it was necessary to agree with the amendment in this place when the government disagreed with it in the Legislative Council?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: As I said, getting legislation through the upper house is all about compromise. We do not have the numbers in the upper house. The Liberal Party has the numbers and it wants to continue to play politics on every part of this pandemic.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Picking up on the minister's comment about the previous clause, it is important to note one thing. In the last week in this place, the Attorney General noted that it was the Leader of the Opposition who first called for the border to be closed. That is matter of fact and is in *Hansard*. I do not know; there are some inconsistencies with the government's approach with ministers either acknowledging things or trying to spin their way out of different things. I appreciate that the minister said that she would not read the comments from my Facebook page. Many of those comments were not made by anyone in my district.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Member for Mandurah, oddly enough, most of them were not made by people in my district and, oddly enough, most of them had links back to the organisational wing of the Labor Party. I find that fascinating but I look forward —

Mr W.J. Johnston: That is made up!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: No, it is not made up all.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Yes, it is.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: No, it is not. Has the member for Cannington gone through them?

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Yes, absolutely.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Okay, you name me one person.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I do not have it in front of me and I do not know off the top of my head the names of each of the 31 500 people I have the privilege of representing but, member for Cannington, I absolutely went through and made sure that if the people in my district had raised concerns, I would talk to them about those concerns. The majority were not members of my constituency. Instead, when we looked through them we found that they were all Labor Party-initiated trolls. I thank the minister for not divulging those comments —

Mr W.J. Johnston: It's a fabrication.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: No, it is not a fabrication at all. The Labor Party conducts this all the time. The Labor Party goes through the dark arts and makes sure that it trolls and abuses members of the Liberal Party regularly on social media. That is exactly what happened in this case. I know that the member for Cannington would never have done that when he was state secretary but it is happening now. I look forward to the member for Cannington standing in this place to reject that and put his word on the line by saying that the Labor Party does not do it. I can tell him that the Liberal Party never does it but its members are victims of it orchestrated by the Labor Party of Western Australia.

Mr W.J. Johnston: What rubbish!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, minister!

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: I refer to transparency on the border issue. We have been focusing on the Premier and his views but the WAtoday article also refers to comments by the Treasurer, who is in the chamber. The article quotes him as saying —

Treasurer Ben Wyatt was even more strident and called the opposition hypocritical for pushing the idea. He suggested an open border—our ability to ship our goods, to trade, to keep our products moving through our ports—was “the one thing we have to protect in this state” from the economic misery ahead.

The Deputy Premier; Minister for Health was quoted as saying —

“Well, there’s a little thing called the constitution and it’s really up to the national response in terms of how we can appropriately manage the public health risk in Western Australia,” ...

Further, he states —

... we can’t turn around and say one Australian cannot meet and visit another Australian.”

In addition to the Minister for Health having made statements along those lines, so, too, have the Treasurer and the Premier. The Attorney General indicated in this Parliament that it was the Leader of the Opposition who first suggested this idea. It is pretty obvious that there is plenty on the public record to indicate that. The Liberal Party continues to be very supportive of the hard border. When people talk about the way ahead, it is a conversation about trying to work together for the benefit for all Western Australians but also remembering that we are also Australians. I do not want this government to take the line of other state governments that have said, “Australians aren’t welcome in our hospitals. Australians aren’t welcome to receive medical treatment because we deal with only those people who live in our state.” It started getting tribal. I think that the way this is heading is a real disgrace for Australians more broadly. It is disappointing that we are not doing this in a bipartisan way, and that the Labor Party wants to play politics with this rather than be honest.

Ultimately, we all have the interests of Western Australians and their health at heart. All of us have parents and grandparents who are vulnerable. I would assume that everybody wants to protect their loved ones, but the Labor Party seems to have a view that nobody other than people in the Labor Party care about their loved ones, and that nobody other than people in the Labor Party care about their friends and family. It is just hypocritical and so stupid. The fact that the Labor Party has even pushed that argument shows the level of incompetence in its grasp and understanding of the reality that we live in. I understand that the Labor Party is playing politics and trying to play these stupid little games, but we are talking about human beings in a pandemic. Unfortunately, the Labor Party is treating it as a game. It is treating it as though the Liberal Party, which has only nine members out of 36 in the upper house, is somehow controlling the world that it works in. There are a lot of members up there from a lot of parties, including the Greens, the Nationals WA, the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, the Liberal Party and One Nation. If the Labor Party is not convincing any of them and everybody is against the Labor Party, it has to ask itself: are they against it because it is playing politics and they are trying to be genuine, or are they against it because it is just incompetent and coming up with stupidity? It is one of the two: either the Labor Party is incompetent or it is playing political games. I assume it is one of those two; some people might think it is both of them.

The minister’s display here today is an example of that incompetence. Yes, she can get personal and try to put people down, which is what she does when she has nothing substantial to win her argument, but that is going to get the minister nowhere. That is just a bit of fun and theatre. Fantastic—great! It does not really mean much; it just washes over people. The minister should be honest. She should show us that she is actually a minister who cares, who takes her job seriously and is here to look after the people of Western Australia as a representative of this Parliament and a representative of the executive, rather than playing these cheap, stupid, political games. I have said many times before that the Premier needs to be a statesman, not a gutter politician. He needs to be a statesman, and playing in gutter politics at this point in time is not appropriate. It is something we should not be doing. It is actually a disgrace to the entire Parliament that it has descended into this. I am sure the minister will keep doing it, because she does not really care, because that is what she likes to do, if we resort back to the minister’s position of strength, but I would hope that she is learning something out of this process. I would hope that she is taking this seriously. In many years to come, when the minister has retired or has left this Parliament, she can look back at her career and say, “You know what? I wasn’t a gutter politician; I wasn’t one of those people who just

muck raked. I was genuine; I was real and sincere in what I tried to do in this place.” That is what it is really about when someone leaves this place. Hopefully, the minister will wake up. I do not understand why people have to descend to the gutter all the time.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I move to proposed amendment 7, which is —

Clause 30, page 19, line 6 — To delete “section 3; and” and substitute —
section 3(a) or (b); and

After the exceptional contribution by the member for Carine, I was hoping that the minister might be able to provide us with some information as to why the government wants to delete “section 3” and insert “section 3(a) or 3(b)”.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Clauses 30 and 31 permit decision-makers to alter time frames for authorisations and modify or remove conditions of authorisations. The proposed amendments would mean that a decision-maker could not exercise a power in response to economic problems caused by COVID-19. We accepted that we would remove the power being exercised for economic purposes. Again, we had to compromise on these clauses, and that is one we compromised on.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I thank the minister for that response. I assume that deleting the reference to “section 3” does not substantially change the nature of what was originally intended within the legislation.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We would have preferred the community to benefit from this power to ensure economic recovery in such a time that we need those particular powers, but we had to compromise.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I might have been misreading and I apologise. There is now the deletion of the words —
the order is made before the original expiry day for the authorisation;

Am I looking at the right area for that?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The effect of the proposed amendment is that proposed section 30(2)(a) will refer to only proposed sections 3(a) and 3(b) and not the entirety of proposed section 3. Proposed section 3 includes economic recovery.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Minister, I appreciate that response. In that case, can we move to proposed amendment 9, which is an amendment to the long title. With your indulgence, Mr Acting Speaker, I understand that the proposed amendment is for the removal of the words “immediately before” in the long title. I will go to that. The original dot point in the long title states that this legislation will —

... validate certain actions taken immediately before, during or following the state of emergency declared in relation to the pandemic on 16 March ...

I am just curious: what was the “immediately before” part?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It was a drafting error, so it will be removed. Its inclusion had no effect in the bill, but it was a drafting error that could be removed.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Did the government identify that as a drafting error?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I think that it was picked up during the debate in the upper house.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Going through the debate in *Hansard*, I understand there was a suggestion that there may have been a meeting held perhaps the day before the pandemic or state of emergency was declared. I would like to clarify that, because there seemed to be a bit of confusion in the other place about the timing. I am keen to understand whether the minister can shed any light on it.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: There was an initial thought that there potentially was a meeting held just prior to the pandemic being declared. During drafting, it was realised that no meeting was held beforehand, but the subsequent change to the bill did not occur; that is why it is a drafting error.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Perhaps the minister has clarified it, but there was concern expressed, and certainly I had concerns during the debate, that actions may have been carried out before that would not otherwise have been legal. Is the minister confident that none of those actions occurred? I am not making an allegation; I just want clarity, because that was certainly a concern I had during the debate on this bill.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The legislation provides the time frame, so the issue that the member has raised will not be allowed.

Question put and passed; the Council’s amendments agreed to.

The Council acquainted accordingly.

HEALTH SERVICES AMENDMENT BILL 2019

Third Reading

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [1.29 pm]: On behalf of the Minister for Health, I move —

That the bill be now read a third time.

MR Z.R.F. KIRKUP (Dawesville) [1.30 pm]: I thank the Leader of the House for the opportunity to respond to the third reading of the Health Services Amendment Bill 2019. I will not take up too much time. I appreciate that the Minister for Health is not here at the moment, but he has provided a minister who is more than adequate to respond to this stage of the bill.

Dr D.J. Honey: Very generous of you.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: We have to be, from time to time, member for Cottesloe.

I thank the minister and his team for their consideration and assistance as we dealt with the Health Services Amendment Bill, which was introduced last year prior to the pandemic and the state of emergency. As the Minister for Transport reflected on moments ago, that seems like it was forever ago. This is an important piece of legislation that has moved through this place. Largely, it amends the Health Services Act 2016, which was implemented by the former government. I would particularly like to thank the Minister for Health for going through the consideration in detail stage to the extent that he did last night.

I will reiterate a couple of concerns that I have with the bill, which I am sure will be articulated further in the Legislative Council. One concern in particular is the financial guarantees that are provided, but no opportunity will be given for them to be publicly disclosed. I am a bit concerned about that and about the disposal of land arrangements and the role the minister will have in terminating any existing arrangements. I am concerned about the liability to recover compensable charges for health services, particularly from the estate of a deceased patient.

The final area of concern, which was noted during the second reading debate, is in two parts. The first is the notices of financial difficulty or impairment for a health service provider. Although the minister suggested that notification that an HSP was in financial difficulty would be a relatively routine exercise, I think some important work can be done to make sure that those notices of financial difficulty are made public. I appreciate that the minister suggested it might be an irregular situation. Only two notices of financial difficulty have been served since 2016. I think there is a case for that to be made public, or at least for the Parliament to be advised through some mechanism or through gazettal. I think that is an area of interest.

The second part of that concern is similar to the matter that we raised during the debate on the Infrastructure Western Australia Bill that the Premier; Minister for State Development brought into this place. The concern relates to the disclosure of potential conflicts of interest. I think we all realise in this place that ministers are, at times, held responsible for some of the errors or matters of misconduct of board members. Obviously, ministers cannot be expected to have a full awareness of the conflicts and financial obligations of all the board members. The government is expected to be responsive to any concerns that might be raised. As a result, I think it is important for conflict-of-interest registers, which will be created as a result of clause 39, to be publicly scrutinised in some way, shape or form. It is the same issue that was raised during the debate on the Infrastructure Western Australia Bill. It is a reflection of the practice in New South Wales, where conflict-of-interest registers are made publicly available and can be explored. As the minister noted a number of times in his conversations with me, the strength of Western Australia's health system is that everyone knows each other, but that is also a weakness because, as a result, we have individuals who become very specialised, and those medical individuals—they are not always clinicians, but they certainly serve in the medical sector—find themselves across a great deal of interests. Therefore, when they deal with a health service provider, they may have had some interaction with it. I think it is important for a conflict-of-interest register to be scrutinised by the public. During the consideration in detail stage, the minister noted that that scrutiny would likely come about through a freedom of information request. I again make the point that my concern is that we are largely talking about people who are not public servants. Thus, as board members of a health service provider, they are not subject to the Freedom of Information Act in that respect. Therefore, if their personal matters are the subject of a freedom of information application, they may not be captured. I think it is important to have an appropriate level of disclosure and transparency in those matters. That is not an adverse reflection on the government; it is something that could become good practice for governments going forward.

I thank the Minister for Health in particular for his ongoing good relationship when dealing with the opposition, and with me in particular when dealing with health-related legislation. Indeed, his chief of staff, his ministerial advisers and the department and agencies were extensively involved in the drafting of this bill and its presentation to both houses. I commend the bill to the house.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [1.34 pm] — in reply: On behalf of the Minister for Health, I thank the member for Dawesville and other members for their contributions to the consideration in detail stage and for the passage of the Health Services Amendment Bill 2019 through the Legislative Assembly. I also acknowledge, obviously, the advice provided by the advisers during the consideration in detail stage. I am pleased that this bill will now pass this chamber and make its way to the other place.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

SWAN VALLEY PLANNING BILL 2020*Second Reading*

Resumed from 19 August.

MR Z.R.F. KIRKUP (Dawesville) [1.35 pm]: I rise to talk on the Swan Valley Planning Bill 2020. I am not the Liberal Party's lead speaker in the Legislative Assembly or the shadow minister or spokesperson on behalf of the party more generally speaking, but I have the Legislative Assembly obligations for this bill in this place. Similar to other planning legislation, I look forward to working with the Minister for Planning on this bill as cordially as we always do. I note at the outset that the Liberal Party will support this legislation. As part of my contribution, I will clarify some aspects of the bill and reflect on similar legislation.

At the outset, I suspect that my interaction with the Swan Valley is by no means as deep as that of the minister. I assume the minister lives in Roleystone, not in the Swan Valley. I grew up in the eastern suburbs, and the Swan Valley was always like a playground for us in the sense that it was, and remains, an area of remarkable diversity that we would not otherwise get so close to Perth. When I went to school at "Govo" in Midland, we would look over the river and see the back of vineyards. An amazing agricultural sub-region of Perth is sitting there. That is its strength, and it is a great part of Western Australia's heritage. To be perfectly frank—I think this will be resolved through this legislation—I think it is important to have good leadership over the entirety of the future of the Swan Valley. Its development has from time to time been ad hoc.

Mates of mine have parents who still live there. One of those parents sold a block of land that has been subdivided into a billion homes. They lived on Henley Street and Park Street in Henley Brook, which does not necessarily form the crux of the Swan Valley's prime agricultural and tourism value. Initially, it was largely developed by LWP Property Group, with the state government's involvement in Ellenbrook. That development has spread across the Vines. I rarely get out there anymore, but when I visited my mates' parents who live on Henley Street, the development around Brabham and Dayton and those sorts of areas was remarkable to me. I can remember that when I was a young bloke—I am sure it is fine to say now—I was certainly aware that people would be four-wheeling through there on dirt bikes. It was an area that was not developed. Some of it was not privately held; it was an open swathe of land that was vested in different areas of government responsibility. Through the government's and others' remit, there were obviously private dwellings on large blocks. As time went on, the diversification and increased urbanisation meant that people were living there on cottage lots as well as some on large lots. Ellenbrook first took off and went through different stages, as the minister rightly pointed out, through an injection of other estates that have come through.

I think it is really important to protect the nature of what we expect the Swan Valley to be, at the very least on the arterials and spines that tourists would go through on a drive or on a bus. We would expect the experience to be somewhat agricultural and related to wine production. I note that a couple of breweries, a distillery and things like that have been developed over time. I do not think they are necessarily an issue. I do not think their land use is incongruent with the idea of enjoying food and drink that is notionally produced on site. I know that Feral Brewing Company, for example, has been bought out, but it was a little brew pub at one point in time, a little homestead. Now it is very popular with tourists. That is probably one of the furthest. It is not even on one of the main strips through the Swan Valley. I am sorry for the detour, Acting Speaker. In this case, I am suggesting that it is really important to preserve the nature of the Swan Valley when we can to guard against increased urbanisation. But we have to do that with a balance that notes that more and more people want to live there. More and more people want to live close to the city.

Ellenbrook is a major hub. I expect the minister or certainly others, perhaps the member for Swan Hills, will talk about the Ellenbrook train line. There is the idea, of course, that there is an increase in urban connectivity to Ellenbrook, which when I was growing up was a far-flung place. The Swan Valley was really a generous buffer between that encroachment of urbanisation from the Morley–Bassendean area to Midland up. It was a largely undeveloped area. It was really special, and it remains special to this day. Unfortunately, we have seen a decrease in agricultural use. The member for Cottesloe, in one of his areas of interest in agriculture and water, would undoubtedly advise me of this, but I am certain there has been a decrease in water availability to those who run viticultural operations there. That has probably led in no small part to that land being disposed of, or perhaps it simply is not as productive as it used to be.

I am going to rest on the minister's family history here, but I think in Rome there is an urban city centre, a ring of agricultural production areas around it and then suburban development outside of that ring. I like that idea. It harks back to early colonisation and land use in the area. I think the Swan Valley area should now be guarded, as much as it can, as a drawcard that is only 25 to 30 minutes to the city by bus. That is an area that people would otherwise not experience. It is an area of heritage. It has important Aboriginal history to our state. With the support of the Labor Party, there was the establishment of the Yagan memorial along the banks of one of the rivers. I think it is Ellen Brook.

Ms J.J. Shaw: It is on the Swan River.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: It is on the Swan River, sorry. I thank the member for Swan Hills. It reflects an important part of the Aboriginal history there. There should be more investment to reflect on what Aboriginal people used that land for before it was largely used for wine production.

This bill reflects a similar piece of legislation that the Liberal Party introduced in 2016. There are somewhat different mechanisms of protection and how the area would be governed. As we would expect, there is a large reliance on a scheme amendment or something like that to dictate land use and how it would go. Previously, I think, another development mechanism was going to be established by the former government. When that occurred, the now minister, who is also the member for West Swan—we are talking about the district that the current member for West Swan represents—outlined one of the biggest concerns. I will quote it, because I do not want to get it wrong. When the 2016 legislation came into this place, she said that the community would be relying on a largely unseen part of the bill to provide the contemporary framework that governs the development of the Swan Valley. I understand the need to put a scheme amendment in place. It is an understandable mechanism, although we do not get to see what it looks like just yet. The minister suggested in her contribution that there would be the continued right to farm. Although that is not explicitly said in the bill, I assume it will be reflected in the scheme amendment. I suspect a scheme amendment would allow for continued attention being paid to land use in the area and it will be updated as time goes on and needs arise.

I was very pleased to see that the Swan Valley planning scheme would be administered by the Western Australian Planning Commission subcommittee. The City of Swan has only one constituent member as part —

Ms R. Saffioti: Two.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: There are two constituent members. I thank the minister very much. I think I have talked in this place before about areas of importance, particularly areas of density, where there could be important activation for development. We need something like the Midland Workshops, Armadale or East Perth. I like the idea of planning control areas for which effectively one body can make those decisions. The idea is that a subcommittee of the WAPC will be part of that. I assume, therefore, that although the WAPC will have the statutory ability to question that advice, it largely will not question it. However, we do not know about the Swan Valley planning scheme or how it will come about. That is a fairly straightforward discussion.

I think all of us in this place, given the intent of the previous government and this government, believe the Swan Valley to be a special location. We want to preserve as much of it as possible while trying to balance increasing diversification and the encroachment of urbanisation. We want to ensure a good level of preservation of important historical agricultural facilities. As time has gone on, they have probably not been as productive as they might have been, but they offer a really good opportunity for tourists to get an agricultural experience, which they might not otherwise have a chance to do unless they go to the south west, for example.

One continued area of interest is the ongoing ability to subdivide large individual blocks and what that would look like. I suspect it is a challenge for the government to define what it will look like. A decision on scale would probably be reliant on the Swan Valley planning scheme and consultation—that is, how much would have to be preserved at a minimum. All of us know that as time goes on and the city continues to expand and grow, people still prefer detached or semi-detached dwellings, and there will be an appetite for more greenfields and brownfields land on which to build large-scale estates or, indeed, an appetite to subdivide land. I have friends whose family lives on Henry Street, for example, and who do not have that capacity. I do not know whether they will ever have that capacity. I have not looked at the map for where they might fit in the scheme. It is understandable that as people see Ellenbrook develop, some would want to stay on their large blocks and some would see it is an opportunity, particularly older people who do not have superannuation or a pension, to subdivide and dispose of the land and use the proceeds for their retirement. Of course, there needs to be a balance that in some way preserves the semirural aesthetic we have all come to value and enjoy in the Swan Valley.

I would like to reflect on the work of the late Hon John Kobelke, who was commissioned by the government in 2017 to work in consultation with the community to develop and guide some of the government's intent in this place. He was obviously held in very high esteem by both sides of politics. He would have worked to ensure a good level of community consultation.

I note, as the minister would if she was in our position, that the government is a bit up against it in the timing and passage of this legislation. In the other place, we have been given a list of 19 priority bills that have to get passed by the end of the fortieth Parliament. I am not entirely certain that the Swan Valley Planning Bill 2020 is on the list.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: It is on it; there we go.

Ms R. Saffioti: It is number nine.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: It is number nine; there we go. I am sure that will be subject to negotiation in the other place. The government is attempting to pursue an ambitious legislative agenda in the Legislative Council.

I am interested in the minister's general thoughts, perhaps during consideration in detail or in her reply, if areas of development were found in the Swan Valley that the minister did not think would be consistent with a new scheme amendment. I think of the table grape producers. I love going down there and seeing people selling fruit and veggies on the side of the road. We see large wineries, such as Sandalford, and breweries. It is a really good mix for tourism opportunities. It is obvious that other competing land uses exist in that area. I am keen to get an idea from the government about which of the current land uses might be inconsistent going forward if the government were to implement a scheme amendment. I imagine that the minister would already have an idea about that, given her representation of the community.

One issue that I have raised in this place is the increasing urban encroachment on Whiteman Park. That is apart from the issue of public transport infrastructure, which I will not deviate by getting onto. Whiteman Park is a large area of land. There is a lot of interest in Whiteman Park. There is also a lot of amenity that the community has relied upon. I would not consider it to be a park in the traditional English sense, with a lot of lawn areas that are within walking distance. It is an area that people largely drive into, park their car, and walk around. I admit that I have not been to Whiteman Park for some time. That area demonstrates the uniqueness of what we are dealing with in the Swan Valley. It is a diverse area, largely semirural, and largely semi-developed. I am not sure whether that is the right word, and I am not trying to be denigrating, but it is a diverse area. Whiteman Park is across the road from some significant subdivisions. As we keep moving east on a continuum, we get to areas in which I imagine people still run horse studs and the like. We then come across wineries, good restaurants like Henley Brook, and Laser Corps Swan Valley. The different land uses in that area reflect the complexity we will have to deal with if we want to maintain the heritage value of the Swan Valley. It is important that we control further ad hoc development and subdivision in order to maintain the rural, semirural and traditional character of that area.

I turn now to the truncated process for community consultation and agency referral for any proposed developments in the Swan Valley. I expect that the minister would know the community well, given that she has represented it since 2008, as would also the member for Swan Hills, and the member for Darling Range, who has a significant interest because of her background in the area. A number of us have a more passive interest in the Swan Valley. We need to strike the right balance between community consultation and the truncated process that is proposed in this bill. I appreciate that in this case, the government wants to expedite the planning processes through a scheme amendment. However, it is important to ensure that there is a high level of community involvement. Although the government and the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage might have ideas about what they would like to see established in the Swan Valley, it is ultimately a playground for the people of Western Australia and visitors to Western Australia to enjoy the unique offerings in that area. Therefore, we need to rely on community consultation as much as we can. We obviously need to take in good faith what the proposed planning scheme will look like, because we are not dealing with that as part of this legislation, so we do not know, but we hope it will be congruent with community expectations.

I imagine, although it is not clear from my reading of the bill, that any decisions that are made will be reviewable by the State Administrative Tribunal.

Ms R. Saffioti: Yes.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I appreciate that, minister. That is an understandable appeal mechanism in that respect. I am also concerned about the publishing requirements. We dealt with that earlier in the debate on the Health Services Amendment Bill. It is important that there is public disclosure of any considerations and decisions for development, and the ability to comment. That should be thoroughly explored to ensure that a high level of rigour is put in place for ongoing community involvement.

The only other thing I would like to discuss is the future of the Swan Valley. I think all of us in this place value the Swan Valley and what it has to offer. However, there will be ongoing challenges to the viability of that land going forward. We need to make sure that agricultural producers are given good access to water and viable land. The increasing diversification of land use in the Swan Valley reflects the fact that people who have commercial interests in that area know that they cannot continue to rely on vineyards and on producing fruit and vegetables but need to diversify their product offering with restaurants, breweries and distilleries. The future of the Swan Valley is an interesting question. I look forward to continuing to be part of that discussion, not only as the Liberal Party's planning representative in the Legislative Assembly, but also as a Western Australian who has a history of having grown up in the eastern suburbs. As I said at the start, and as I will say as I finish, the Swan Valley was one of the most unique areas that I visited as a kid growing up, and going to Governor Stirling Senior High School and looking at the amazing vineyards in the Swan Valley, which is something we usually do not get so close to a capital city. The Swan Valley should be preserved, and the stewardship of that area should be dealt with in consultation with the community, as best as is possible. We look forward to going into consideration in detail on this bill and going through some of those issues. We support the legislation.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): The member for Cottesloe.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I am happy to defer to the Deputy Leader of the National Party.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Nationals WA) [1.54 pm]: I thank the member for Cottesloe for his generous deferral.

I would like to talk briefly on the Swan Valley Planning Bill. The debate will be interrupted at two o'clock by question time, so I will make some further comments after question time. The Nationals WA will be supporting the bill that has been proposed by the government. This bill will have effect in the metropolitan planning area. The Nationals do not normally get into a discussion about planning matters within the boundaries of the city because, by definition, we are concerned with matters in regional areas; therefore, it is a bit unusual for us to pay a great deal of attention to a bill such as this. However, I will be following the discussion during consideration in detail and will be asking some questions as this bill progresses. I say that because this bill has quite a lot of resonance with areas that National Party members of Parliament represent, particularly some of the more peri-urban areas such as Chittering Valley, which I represent, and Avon Valley, which the Leader of the Nationals and member for Central Wheatbelt represents. Therefore, the Nationals understand the conflicts and opportunities that the Swan Valley presents, and the difficulty of ensuring that it maintains its rural character. The Swan Valley is not only an attractive area close to the city, but also an area of significant agricultural production. That also has resonance to Avon Valley and Chittering Valley. We know the pressures that arise when people view an area as a desirable place to live, because they like both its proximity to the metropolitan area and its rural characteristics and the ability to diversify into a bit of agriculture themselves. However, at the same time, we need to be careful that that does not lead to the destruction of the thing that they have come to enjoy, that being the rural character of the landscape of the Swan Valley.

I was pleased to have a briefing from the minister's office and the department on the matters outlined in the Swan Valley Planning Bill 2020. The bill has provisions that seek to lay out what is known as a right to farm. The legislation does not explicitly outline what a right to farm might be, but the objects of the legislation clearly protect the rural nature of the land and seek to ensure that it will be maintained as a productive agricultural area while at the same time facilitating some level of development as required.

Mr W.J. Johnston: There was a select committee into the right to farm in the 1990s.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I thank the member for that information.

These issues are of great importance. New South Wales has a very explicit act of Parliament, which I found the other day, the Right to Farm Bill 2019. I believe that bill has now been passed by both houses of the New South Wales Parliament.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 5604.]

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

CORONAVIRUS — WA NURSES — MELBOURNE QUARANTINE

624. Mrs L.M. HARVEY to the Premier:

Can the Premier confirm claims from the Australian Nursing Federation's Mark Olson that the six Western Australian nurses and one support worker currently in quarantine in Melbourne have been gagged from talking to the media unless one of his minders is present?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I followed up these claims this morning. I was advised they are not true.

CORONAVIRUS — WA NURSES — MELBOURNE QUARANTINE

625. Mrs L.M. HARVEY to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Can the Premier advise why these selfless nurses were told that there was never a contingency plan to bring them home despite a promise to do so, and will he now apologise to those distressed nurses and their families for his government only providing a solution following significant community and media pressure?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I want to say that the government has utmost respect and greatest support for these people who went over to Victoria to assist our fellow Australians during their time of need. A number of nurses and logisticians and other people headed to Victoria to assist over this period. They have my utmost support and they have been heroic over this period in volunteering to go and assist our fellow Australians, both in aged care and in hospitals in Victoria. The government called for volunteers to assist, as have all states. The commonwealth government urged us to do that, but I was of a mind that we should do that in any event, because assisting Australians in need is in their interest, it is the right thing to do. It is also in our interest because, obviously, the sooner the virus is under control in Victoria, the better it will be for all Western Australians as well.

Arrangements have been put in place for these seven nurses. There have been conversations over the course of the last day or so between Dr Robyn Lawrence and the nurses to resolve arrangements to the satisfaction of both the

nurses and their families, I am advised. The arrangements that have been put in place will allow the nurses to quarantine in Victoria. The six members of the team who are not suffering from COVID, at the conclusion of that period, assuming they do not get ill, will be charter flown, on what is called a clean flight, back to Western Australia. Then they will be able to rejoin their families. This has been resolved by the Chief Health Officer and Dr Robyn Lawrence, who is the Deputy Chief Health Officer, and the individuals themselves in conversations over the course of the last day.

Obviously, it is a very traumatic event for all people involved. On behalf of all Western Australians, I express my thoughts, my appreciation and my gratitude for what they have done. They are great people.

MCGOWAN GOVERNMENT — JOB CREATION

626. Mr K.J.J. MICHEL to the Premier:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to making Western Australians a priority for local jobs. Can the Premier outline what the government has done to help make that happen?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for Pilbara for the question. The government has put a lot of effort into providing local employment over its time in office, including the Western Australian Jobs Act, the Western Australian Industry Participation Strategy and the Buy Local 2020 policy. Prior to the advent of COVID, 72 000 jobs had been created in Western Australia on this government's watch. Obviously, COVID has caused some issues, which we are currently dealing with, but I think we are getting our state's economy back on track.

There have also been some issues with getting a workforce out to regional Western Australia, so we have now launched the Work and Wander Out Yonder campaign to get Western Australians out there and linked with regional employers, particularly in agriculture. We are seeing some very, very good and pleasing results in terms of people interested in employment linking up with employers through some of the sites like Seek and Studium. The results, even in the short time that this program has been released, have been very, very pleasing. As I outlined the other day, I have raised with the Prime Minister the idea—I think they should implement it immediately—that if a person is prepared to go and work in seasonal agriculture, they should be able to receive that income on top of their JobSeeker payments for at least this year, because the situation requires those sorts of extraordinary measures. People would not go and work and lose JobSeeker so they are not in any way better off. Otherwise, we will not secure people to go and do that sort of work. On top of that, the Minister for Agriculture and Food today announced the primary industry workers regional travel and accommodation support scheme, funded by the state government. That provides support of up to \$3 360 to people from the state government if they go and do 12 weeks of work, and up to \$500 in travel allowance for people from the city to go to the regions. This will provide support for Western Australians to go out there, on top of our advertising campaign and linking up employers and people going to do this work.

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The member can ask me a question, if he likes.

The other point is that over the period of COVID we have made it very plain to the major companies that we want to see interstate fly in, fly out workers relocate to Western Australia, and many have. I am advised that thousands have relocated to Western Australia out of Brisbane or Melbourne or Sydney. They are living here and many have brought their families with them. Basically, they have done their quarantine and are now working and living in Western Australia, and their incomes are staying in our state. The days of 7 000 FIFO workers out of the east, flying in and out, in a COVID environment, are over. It is over. I have been very clear with the major mining and oil and gas companies that those days are over and we need to move to a new arrangement whereby their workforce is based here. I was very pleased to note that BHP has done a great thing in implementing a new policy that means that it will explicitly preference Western Australian job applicants for the positions it offers in Western Australia. If they do not, interstate candidates will be required to permanently relocate to Western Australia whilst they work for the company. I am very pleased that BHP has done that. I want to publicly acknowledge particularly Edgar Basto and Mike Henry from BHP for listening to the calls from the Western Australian government and the Western Australian community. It is terrific for our state that this company has done that. I note Rio Tinto is doing something similar. I would like to congratulate it. But I want all the mining companies and all the oil and gas companies to do exactly the same.

It is terrific because if we get those people with large incomes and their families here buying houses, building houses and keeping their incomes in Western Australia, it is great for our state. I note that today the housing industry, in particular Cath Hart from the Housing Industry Association, tweeted —

Great to see @bhp & other miners acknowledge the significant shift by @MarkMcGowanMP earlier this year to reconnect #WAjobs to WA residents by reforming interstate #FIFO. This massive shift helps WA's domestic economy and will sustain the state's longer-term recovery ...

I thank Cath Hart for her kind words. This has been a joint effort of government, and I am sure Western Australia will be the beneficiary.

AMBULANCE RAMPING

627. Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP to the Premier:

I refer to ambulance ramping statistics provided by St Johns, statistics that the Premier's government no longer provides to the people of Western Australia.

- (1) Can the Premier confirm that ambulance ramping statistics for the month of August are the third highest on record?
- (2) Can the Premier confirm that the three worst months of ambulance ramping in the state's history have occurred under his government and all within the last 18 months?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)–(2) I can confirm that we have the best hospitals and the best emergency departments in the country, and that when the surveys are done, Western Australia's emergency departments are the best in Australia in terms of their performance and efficiency. If the member wants further details on the specifics around these matters, I urge him to ask the Minister for Health, who is currently sitting opposite him, and make sure that he brings any questions to his attention. Yesterday, I was in the member for Dawesville's electorate again, and I must say that people down there are very appreciative of our hardworking health professionals. We have a hardworking health professional running for the electorate of Dawesville, Lisa Munday, an ambulance officer, who is a terrific person who understands our health system and has a deeper appreciation, one might say, than the shadow Minister for Health.

AMBULANCE RAMPING

628. Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, please! I want to hear the supplementary.

Mr D.A. Templeman: A bit of a nosebleed there, son?

The SPEAKER: Leader of the House, you are called to order for the second time. That is funny, but unparliamentary.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Can the Premier explain how ambulance ramping continues to hit crisis levels under his government, especially considering the flu is no longer a reason that can be blamed and we have in fact seen a reduction in demand in our state's emergency departments because of COVID-19?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

The Minister for Health advises me that the figures are improving, and obviously a constant thing that governments try to do is to improve these matters and this performance across government. That is the record of this government. We obviously put a great focus on health and over the course of the pandemic, we put enormous effort into health to ensure our people are kept safe. One of the great things about the last 151 days is that we have not had one single case of community spread of coronavirus in Western Australia.

Mrs L.M. Harvey interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, that should be something to be happy about.

Mr M. McGOWAN: While the Liberal Party—it just did it again—constantly tries to politicise this matter, we are doing our best in difficult circumstances to deal with a very serious issue confronting our state, our country and our world.

METRONET PROJECTS

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

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's \$5.5 billion WA recovery plan that includes the construction of Metronet, the largest single investment in public transport this state has ever seen.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the work underway to deliver both the Thornlie–Cockburn Link in my electorate and the Byford rail extension?
- (2) Can the minister outline to the house how these projects are creating local jobs and supporting local businesses?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Southern River for his question and of course his tireless efforts in advancing the needs and wants of his community. Of course, he has been much more successful than his predecessor when it comes to delivering the Thornlie–Cockburn Link. Do members remember that predecessor who

kept talking about how he wanted to get it happening, but of course was never taken seriously by the previous government? This government is delivering the commitments we gave to the people of Southern River, Jandakot, Byford and Yanchep. Across the state and the suburbs, we are delivering those commitments.

The past few weeks have been pretty busy out there and I will outline some of the new milestones when it comes to delivering our transport infrastructure. A very interesting fact that I am sure all members will appreciate is that we are spending \$260 million a month on transport infrastructure in Western Australia compared with \$150 million a month five years ago, as the member for Jandakot, with his tireless efforts in promoting the needs of the community, knows. We were out there—also, the member for Gosnells, who is not in this chamber at the moment—looking at what these improvements mean to not only public transport users, but also road users, with \$26 million to upgrade the Ranford Road bridge, another project being delivered as part of our Metronet program. Together with Ranford Road bridge, we outlined the look of the three new stations—the upgraded Thornlie station, the beautiful Ranford Road and Nicholson Road stations, the new car parks and the connections to the community. They are all excellent initiatives, and all underway under this government. Another favourite of ours—as I said, there are a lot of projects to have favourites—is Byford station. We were out in Byford and we announced the location of the new station. It is exactly where the Shire of Serpentine–Jarrahdale wanted it, connected to what will be a very growing and vibrant town centre. I have had meetings with the shire, and it is so much looking forward to working with a government that is delivering infrastructure in its area. There are new station connections across the rail line, and of course connections to the existing shops. This is a Labor government that is delivering its commitments. Do members know when the good folk of Byford would have to wait for their rail line under the previous government? They would have had to wait until 2050, members. The Liberal Party's transport plan had the objective of delivering a Byford rail line in 2050, and here we are in 2020 getting on with the job delivering for the good folk of Darling Range the services and infrastructure they deserve.

DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT —
DECENTRALISATION

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

I refer to the announcement today that state plans to relocate the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development from Kensington to the CBD. Why has the Premier's government ignored the opportunity to decentralise and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development?

Mr D.T. Redman: It sounds like he has not been told.

The SPEAKER: A bit like the ag department.

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I note the member is a member of the Nationals WA and there were National Party agricultural ministers for eight and a half years, one of them who is sitting next to him, and they did not do it.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr M. McGOWAN: We had to backfill the then Department of Agriculture and Food's budget before last to ensure that it could properly function, because it was cut so heavily during the Liberal–National government that preceded us. That is what happened. Thank god we have Hon Alannah MacTiernan—someone who actually understands and supports agriculture.

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warren–Blackwood!

Mr M. McGOWAN: She is ensuring that important initiatives are taken, one of which is to deal with the accommodation pressures in Kensington. The building itself is old, it would be fair to say, dated and leaking. Apparently, during a recent storm, water was flushing through the building. There are some significant accommodation pressures and requirements there that no government before now ever dealt with. I can see the member sitting there with his supplementary question not listening.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Nationals WA!

Mr M. McGOWAN: He and others always sit there waiting to jump out of their seat not listening to the answers. He is going to read it out, I know he is; it does not matter what I say.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Nationals WA, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr M. McGOWAN: There have been significant accommodation pressures in the old building in Kensington that have needed to be dealt with for a long period, and we have dealt with them. There are also the scientific laboratories and a facility as well that need us to keep the staff in reasonable proximity to one another. If the National Party cared so much about this issue, why, during the Barnett government, the Court government, the O'Connor government, the Court government, the Brand government, the McLarty government and the Mitchell government did it never do it? Why did it never do it? The National Party goes back to 1919. I am trying to remember the government before the Mitchell government. Why did the government before the Mitchell government, whichever government it was, not do it? If Nationals WA members care so much, why did they not do it when they were in office?

DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT —
DECENTRALISATION

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

I have a supplementary question. Premier, is this just another example of the government's failure to understand agriculture and regional development?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members to my right!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: At the same time as he announced Work and Wander Out Yonder, he has centralised agriculture department employees into the CBD.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members on my right! Minister for Mines and Petroleum, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

Mr Speaker, I am going to answer this question; I am not going to read it. As I presciently predicted, the member was going to read the supplementary question, no matter what I said.

This government has a great record on agriculture. We backfilled the funding to the department of agriculture that was cut by the previous government.

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warren–Blackwood, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr M. McGOWAN: What we knew and what was exposed many times was that when the cuts came under the previous government, the one agency that always had cuts was agriculture, so we backfilled the funding there. A couple of weeks ago, I announced a major upgrade to Muresk. It was never done by members opposite. From memory, there is around \$10 million for Muresk.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party, if you want to ask a question, ask it. Do not sit there and answer everyone else's questions. I call you to order for the second time.

Mr M. McGOWAN: We had to upgrade Muresk. We have made a bunch of courses in agriculture more affordable for students, particularly in the current environment, and we announced that as part of our recovery plan. One of the programs I remember is the grains research program that Alannah MacTiernan fought so hard for. There is \$40 million to ensure that our grains research is cutting edge and therefore farmers can cope with the situation that confronts us with declining rainfall. They are three major things that were never done by members opposite. In fact, they made the situation worse when they were in office. Thank goodness we have Alannah MacTiernan, who is a fighter, who will stand up for agriculture and farmers, and who can say something without reading it. Thank God we have Alannah MacTiernan out there standing up for agriculture and regional communities across Western Australia.

POLICE — COPPER THEFT

632. Ms C.M. ROWE to the Minister for Police:

Before I ask my question, I would like to acknowledge on behalf of the member for Swan Hills the student leaders from Eastern Hills Senior High School who are here today.

I refer to the troubling crime of copper theft and its significant impacts on businesses and the community, particularly those in my electorate of Belmont.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house what is the cost of copper theft to the community?
- (2) Can the minister also outline to the house how the McGowan Labor government is responding to this serious issue?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS replied:

I thank the member for Belmont for that question. I also thank the members for Baldivis and Mount Lawley and others who have made representations to me on this issue.

(1)–(2) Copper theft has been a growing problem in the Western Australian community. The member for Belmont raised with me quite some months ago issues that were happening in her community with the theft of copper. A significant amount of copper is stolen in our community each year. We know that millions of dollars' worth of copper is traded and a significant portion of that is illegal. By way of example, we know that this year 18 water fountains were stolen from local parks in the City of Cockburn; 900 metres of copper cabling, worth about \$200 000, was stolen from the City of Melville; and bronze and brass sculptures—works of art—have been stolen from various locations. There has also been the theft of water pipes and wires from homes and public utilities and the consequent risk of that. In some instances, something as small as a water meter is taken. This has had a significant impact on lots of householders who have had their water meters and hot water systems stolen. That copper is being sold for as little as \$5 a kilogram. The cost to householders and the cost of delays and additional building projects is huge.

This is not a new problem. This problem has been raised for years. In fact, we know that it was raised by the Master Builders Association with the Leader of the Opposition in 2015 when she was the Minister for Police.

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warren–Blackwood, I call you to order for the second time.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: The fact of the matter is that members opposite do not like hearing about yet another issue that their incompetent Minister for Police sat on for years and did nothing about. They purport to represent the building industry. They purport to care about householders.

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warren–Blackwood, you are on two.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: They purport to care about small business, but they sat on their hands and did nothing—absolutely nothing. In 2015, it was raised and raised again. There were articles in the paper and lobbying of the minister, but nothing happened. We know that back then the Master Builders Association said that it would like scrap metal dealers to deal with copper under the legislation so that it would be treated like other second-hand goods. Unlike the former government, we can actually walk and chew gum. I heard some interjections saying, “There’s a COVID pandemic; why aren’t you dealing with that?” We can deal with that and still deliver on all the things that members opposite neglected and did not care about when they were in office.

We have put reforms in place now so that copper and copper alloy will be treated the same as gold and silver. Dealers will need to be licensed. It will be mandatory to keep a record of all transactions and provide them to police. Sellers must identify themselves with 100 points of identification and there are penalties of a fine of up to \$20 000 or 12 months' imprisonment for a breach of licensing requirements. They are the tough measures that we have put in place, because when a householder's water meter or hot water system is affected, they have to take time off work, spend hundreds of dollars and do a whole range of things. Members opposite can laugh about it if they like and say that that was not important or it was not a priority, but it was raised time and again with their leader, the former Minister for Police, year in year out from 2015 that we know about, and their government did nothing.

We have regulated. We have moved in there. We have put in place a proper regime so that so many people are not inconvenienced, the community is not penalised, and the cost to people building homes does not go up. I am very proud that the McGowan government can do more than one thing at a time and we can deliver for small businesses, builders and the community.

CORONAVIRUS — POLICE RESOURCES

633. Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS to the Premier:

Can the Premier confirm that the number of frontline police officers tackling the COVID situation has or is likely to be increased beyond the current 400 police officers who have been announced, further exacerbating the lack of frontline police trying to tackle violent crime in Western Australia?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

No, I cannot confirm that. Operational decisions about where and how police are deployed are made by the Commissioner of Police. My view is that the police have been doing a very good job, and this year I have been very grateful for the service they have provided.

I want to say to the member that dealing with COVID is a big deal and it takes a lot of effort by government. We have been very fortunate in Western Australia that the measures we have taken, the resources we have deployed and the way that the public sector has responded have been absolutely fantastic. I would like to thank all the people across the public sector for what they have done. As I said to the member yesterday, the police—I have met them—

have been out in Eucla at the border, in Kununurra at the border and on the roads in between. They have been at the airport to deal with people coming in. Often people are unhappy. They have been in our hotels and they have been contact tracing. They have been deployed in numerous ways. They have been checking on people who are quarantining at home et cetera. It is an important task. I urge the Liberal Party not to try to politicise this. Have members seen what has happened and what is going on in Victoria? I would have thought that they would be saying to us that it has been an appropriate deployment of government resources and police officers to deal with an extraordinary situation that the state is facing.

CORONAVIRUS — POLICE RESOURCES

634. Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Is the Premier able to assure the public of Western Australia that the removal of 400 frontline police officers or any more if there is an operational decision to move more —

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Police!

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: Is the minister able to assure us that that removal will not impact on the number of booze and drug bus deployments that keep our community safe from drunk and drug-drivers?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

These efforts to politicise COVID that the Liberal Party has engaged in over the last six months have been nothing short of disgraceful. This is another example of it. We are trying to save people's lives. We are trying to prevent a deadly virus from getting into Western Australia, which could kill a large number of people, particularly those over the age of 65 years. We are trying to ensure that our economy remains successful and vibrant and the strongest in Australia, which it is today because we have not had COVID come back into our state. These are not easy things to deal with, but Liberal Party members come in here and try to politicise the situation. I do not know who comes up with its strategy. I do not know why the Liberal Party is so adept at offending public opinion and why it has no appreciation that people out there dealing with this issue—such as police officers, who are doing a terrific job—are worried for their lives. Here Liberal Party members are whinging and bemoaning the task that police are performing on behalf of all of us.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Hillarys, you have had your two goes. Member for Hillarys, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr M. McGOWAN: In every state in Australia, and, I suspect, in every jurisdiction around the world, police officers are dealing with matter. The Commissioner of Police, Chris Dawson, and the Acting Commissioner of Police, Gary Dreibergs, have done a wonderful job of deploying resources to save the lives of Western Australians and for some reason, Liberal Party members always want to score political points on this issue—shame on them!

CORONAVIRUS — ECONOMIC RECOVERY — KOOLINUP EMERGENCY SERVICES CENTRE

635. Mr D.T. PUNCH to the Minister for Emergency Services:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's efforts to support local jobs and drive economic activity as the state recovers from the impacts of COVID-19. Can the minister update the house on this government's investment in a new multipurpose emergency services facility in Collie; and can the minister outline to the house how this investment will support local jobs, local businesses and local manufacturing?

Mr F.M. LOGAN replied:

I thank the member for Bunbury for that question and acknowledge his commitment to emergency services in Western Australia. I also acknowledge that only days ago, the two of us visited an arm of emergency services, Marine Rescue Bunbury, to see its new boat *Dingo Marley*. The dingo came around and said hello to us while we were down there, which was fantastic.

The SPEAKER: I am very impressed, minister.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: It was very impressive. The other day before I went to Bunbury I was in Collie for the sod-turning ceremony for the new emergency centre that is in the process of being built in Collie. We were there to do the sod turning and announce the successful tenderer for the construction and give it its new name—the Koolinup Emergency Services Centre—"koolinup" means "to swim" in the local Aboriginal dialect. Obviously, with the Collie River and the other rivers in the area, it is quite an appropriate name for that facility. It will be a terrific \$13.4 million facility that will employ 13 full-time employees in Collie. It will primarily be set up to do a number of things. First, it will be a level 3 incident control facility for the broader south west of Western Australia. Collie is an appropriate place to locate the centre. It will be an outreach of the Bunbury district office. It will also deal with the high-season fire fleet. The high-season fire fleet in Western Australia—that is, the number of trucks that go to the north and help

with the northern season fires and then come back to deal with the southern season fires—continually have to be maintained and upgraded. Until now, that has been done in O'Connor; the workshops there are full of normal Department of Fire and Emergency Services trucks and equipment, so it is quite appropriate for the high-season fire fleet to be maintained elsewhere. It is perfect that it will be done in Collie. Another thing that is happening in Collie is that right across the road, Frontline Fire and Rescue Equipment is building a very large manufacturing facility that will employ 17 full-time tradespeople to build the 4.4 tankers and the small, fast-attack vehicles based on the Toyota chassis.

Mr P.J. Rundle: What about the South West Fire services —

The SPEAKER: What about I call you to order for the first time, member for Roe.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I am sure that South West Fire services has plenty of work on at the moment. The member should go down there and have a look. Frontline Fire and Rescue Equipment won the contract to do this work and took it upon itself, after winning the contract, to invest in Collie and create additional full-time jobs.

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Roe, I call you to order for the second time.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I cannot speak more highly of the company. It is right opposite the new Koolinup Emergency Services Centre and as those vehicles come off the line with Frontline engineering, they will be rolled into the DFES facility across the road and brought into service for the department. The member for Collie–Preston was there with his fantastic replacement, Jodie Hanns, who is a terrific person and who will carry on the good fight on behalf of Collie. Getting 30 full-time trade-skilled jobs into a place like Collie is absolutely fantastic. Everyone knows what is going to happen in Collie in the future. The number of jobs at the power station and mine will start to decline and to secure jobs for those people who will lose their job either at the mine or the power station is a job well done by the McGowan government.

CORONAVIRUS — REGIONAL BUSINESSES AND TOURISM — INCREASE

636. **Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Premier:**

I refer to the significant population increase and pressure placed on essential services and volunteers in tourism communities, such as Exmouth, Coral Bay and Shark Bay, which have seen their usual population increase tenfold for a sustained period. Does the Premier acknowledge that there is now an urgent need for additional police, health and emergency service staff —

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Police, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: — and volunteers in these communities —

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Police, I call you to order for the second time.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Does the Premier acknowledge that there is now an urgent need for additional police, health and emergency services staff and volunteers —

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Police, I call you to order for the third time.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: — in these communities to help them cope with a greatly increased population; and what is the state government doing to help these communities?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

We have done a great deal for the tourism communities of the north, including Exmouth, Broome, Kununurra and Karratha—which I personally think is a great town to visit—Newman, Tom Price, Hedland, Geraldton, Carnarvon and Denham. They are all wonderful communities to visit. We have ensured that the tourism industry is vibrant. That is the main thing that we have done. We have got economic activity back in these communities. There was a period for a number of months, of course, when we had border arrangements within Western Australia to try to prevent the spread of COVID, which had a small prevalence in the community back then, and that arrangement was successful. We brought down those borders and launched the Wander out Yonder campaign and we have had huge success in getting tourists into these communities across Western Australia. The reports I have had from Geraldton, Exmouth and Broome are that there has been a massive number of Western Australians holidaying in Western Australia. I regard that as a success and I think the communities themselves would be saying, “This is a good outcome from what could have been a catastrophic situation.” If we have a look at other places around the world, we see that the tourism industry has died. In Western Australia, certainly in the regions, overwhelmingly, it has been successful.

On the additional resourcing of police officers, as I have said on numerous occasions, as the last Premier and every Premier going back to Sir John Forrest has said, the deployment of police is a matter for the Commissioner of Police. He deploys them on the basis of the assessed need on any given day or month. We have deployed additional resources up to the Kimberley to deal with the borders and the matters surrounding the remote communities. That was a matter that the police commissioner, of course, put in place, and I think that has worked well. I heard the Minister for Police interjecting. She said that there have been no reports of significant additional crime across the north of the state. Again, I say that rather than bemoaning the success of our tourism strategy, I think we should be out there singing the success of Western Australia's marvellous tourism industry.

CORONAVIRUS — REGIONAL BUSINESSES AND TOURISM — INCREASE

637. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Does the Premier acknowledge that without additional resources, these communities have been left at risk and exposed to potential tragedies, such as Coral Bay not having police attend for at least two hours if there was an emergency, or not having a permanent paramedic based in places like Coral Bay or a doctor in Denham to be able to cope with the influx of tourists?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

My understanding is that the nearest police stations are Exmouth and Carnarvon, so obviously deploying —

Mr V.A. Catania: Two hours away.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Hold on; when the member was in office, did he put a police station into Coral Bay? No, he did not. Mr Speaker, he did not put a police station into Coral Bay.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr M. McGOWAN: The police will deploy their resources according to operational need, and that has always been the case. I heard in the member's initial question he was asking why I am not getting more volunteers out there. Volunteers are organic. Communities provide volunteers. I would urge those communities, if they need volunteers for the State Emergency Service or whatever it might be, to volunteer and get involved. That is a matter for individual communities to promote and support. Obviously, we have been dealing with a very difficult situation. I think most people are happy that the virus did not spread north, particularly to Aboriginal communities, and all the feedback I have had from Aboriginal communities is that they are so thrilled that the measures we have taken have so far prevented that from occurring. Secondly, I think those communities are so thrilled that the tourism trade is back better and stronger than ever before because of the measures this government has taken.

VIRTUAL POWER PLANT PILOT

638. Mr R.R. WHITBY to the Minister for Energy:

I refer to the McGowan government's \$5.5 billion state recovery plan that includes significant investments in solar power projects. Can the minister explain what this government's virtual power plant pilot means to schools, including Baldivis Secondary College?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

I appreciate the question from the member, who is constantly requesting additional renewable energy infrastructure in his electorate. I am pleased that I have been able, with the McGowan government, as part of the \$5.5 billion recovery program, to deliver and provide Baldivis Secondary College with a virtual power plant.

The energy system is changing rapidly, and the government of Western Australia is getting ready for that change. One of those changes is that energy is now being created across the network, rather than just in individual, large-scale power stations. We need to harness energy that is produced from these distributed resources, and one way to do that is through a virtual power plant. What Synergy and the Department of Education is doing is to provide a trial for 10 schools across the south west interconnected system, including the Baldivis senior high school, the Kalgoorlie-Boulder Community High School and a range of others. They are harnessing the solar panels and batteries so that these distributed energy resources can be harnessed together to provide services to the system and not just lower cost power to the schools. The benefit to the schools is that they can save on their electricity bill, the benefit to Synergy is that it is part of its new future as a distributed energy resource manager, and the benefit to the community is that we are allowing a higher intake of renewable energy, driving out carbon emissions and making real opportunities for our future.

I just want to let you know, Mr Speaker, that 34 per cent of the installed capacity in the south west system is now renewable energy; in 2019-20, 21 per cent of SWIS generation was from renewable sources. At the moment, one house in every three has solar panels, and we expect that to rise in the next 10 years to one house in two. We are responding to that. We have rolled out community batteries across the south west system, and that will continue into the future. We are delivering standalone power systems to the edge of grid, and now we are doing virtual power plants on schools. This will also allow school students to learn about the technology that is being installed. Synergy

will work with those schools to ensure that there is a STEM component so that science, technology, engineering and mathematics can be supported at those schools so that students understand the benefits that they are getting from the renewable energy and get themselves ready for jobs in the future.

I want to finish by saying that it is not just the south west of the state; there are also 500 houses from the Department of Communities that will be included in a virtual power plant trial by Synergy as part of the recovery from COVID. It is not just the south west of the state. Horizon Power is also rolling out community batteries, standalone power systems and microgrids across regional Western Australia to make sure that the benefits of renewable energy are shared right across our community.

This is an exciting time, because Western Australia is at the leading edge of the development of these technologies. Many of these technologies are not being delivered to us from other parts of the world, but rather being produced here in Western Australia by skilled Western Australian workers. The technologies that are being developed are unique to Western Australia and can now be sold around the world to benefit all of us here in WA.

CORONAVIRUS — HEALTH ADVICE

639. Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP to the Premier:

I refer to the Premier's highly political stunt yesterday tabling out-of-date and peripheral health advice from months ago, largely consisting of old commonwealth government health advice. Why is he refusing to provide all the relevant and current written health advice, and will he commit to tabling all that advice that forms the basis of major COVID-related decision-making impacting Western Australians, including tabling all the various COVID-19 outbreak plans?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

Yesterday, I tabled 242 pages of health advice and correspondence. A Federal Court judgement was included in that in respect of the hard border and the health impacts of the hard border. I tabled 242 pages of information for members. I did that in response.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Hillarys, I call you to order for the second time.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Does the member know why I did that? It was because last week, the Liberal Party was out there saying, "Where's the health advice?" We had already tabled it all over the course of the previous three months. It had all been tabled, it had been handed down in a Federal Court judgement, it had all been released, and then I saw on Friday the Liberal Party out there saying, "We haven't seen any advice." I just thought the Liberal Party had not seen it—the Liberal Party does not appear to take any notice of what happens around the place—so I tabled the information for its benefit.

In respect of the member's claim that it is out-of-date, what a silly thing to say! We have been dealing with this situation since early March this year. The situation in the east since early March has actually gotten significantly worse. At the time we tabled various parts of the health advice, the situation in the east was not as bad as it is today; in other words, the health advice that we tabled was completely current. We also tabled the Federal Court judgement in which Justice Rangiah comprehensively demolished the Liberal Party's witnesses and Clive Palmer's witnesses and agreed with Western Australia, because he analysed all the evidence. So, when I see people out there around Australia saying, "Where's the evidence for this? Why has Western Australia put in place a border?"—I have seen some prominent people around Australia saying this—I ask them to have a look at a Federal Court case that examined all the evidence. That finding is going to be transmitted to the High Court so that it can use that as the findings of fact when it deals with Mr Palmer's High Court challenge to our hard borders. The member for Dawesville asks, "Where's the evidence? Where's the information? Why is it out of date?" It has all been compiled over the past six months. We tabled it all, and some of it—Justice Rangiah—in the last month. I tabled it last week, but the member for Dawesville appears not to have noticed that it has been tabled already.

CORONAVIRUS — HEALTH ADVICE

640. Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Can the Premier confirm that he has tabled all the current health advice before the government; and, if so, will he commit to tabling all the COVID-19 outbreak plans as they stand at this point?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

Those sorts of documents are evolving. I do not think that governments around Australia have tabled that information because on any given day it is being refined, depending upon the circumstances. We do not table something that might be out of date the next day. One of the things I have learnt along this COVID pathway is that things change quickly. I was asked at a press conference this morning why I was not exactly answering what is going to happen next week. The reason is that things may change over the course of the next few days or even over the course of today. That is what happens. We have to actually work within government to ensure that we deal with the circumstance as it evolves. I tabled all the information for the member last week.

The member for Dawesville seems to want to bring down our borders and join Clive Palmer. We are not supporting the Liberal Party in its efforts to join Clive Palmer.

Several members interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Complete nonsense? There they were in the courts. This is what we have had to deal with along this pathway—all this politicisation and these questions from the shadow Minister for Police; all this politicisation of these issues as we go along. Why has the Liberal Party not put forward one constructive idea over this period? All it does is come in and criticise, snipe and try to cause issues and try to score political points along the way. Do not think that the public has not noticed.

The SPEAKER: That is the end of question time. It was a little bit lively today, which is good.

SWAN VALLEY PLANNING BILL 2020

Second Reading

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Nationals WA) [2.52 pm]: I will pick up from where I left off. I was discussing the Right to Farm Bill 2019 that was passed by the New South Wales Parliament. I suggest to the minister that the types of matters that are addressed in the Swan Valley Planning Bill and also in the objects of the bill itself should be incorporated into a separate piece of legislation that would guide all planning documents or, potentially, the Planning Commission could give consideration to the very good objectives that are outlined in the bill and be used as a model or guide for other schemes throughout the state that will face similar issues. Peri-urban local governments, for instance, could also include those objects, provided, of course, that they contain areas of high agricultural priority. I remind the minister of the very large amounts of produce and intensive agriculture that occur in some peri-urban areas such as the Shires of Gingin and Chittering in my electorate. There are very, very important agricultural industries in those shires. Some of them are quite intensive. I am talking about chicken farming and the like, but an awful lot of horticulture also takes place. Some processing is beginning to take place in those areas as some of those activities have been squeezed out of Wanneroo and other outer metropolitan areas over time. They are now being established in places such as Chittering.

The objects in the bill are admirable, but New South Wales has taken the time to include similar objects in an act of Parliament that applies to not only one limited area, but also agriculture across the state. As an organisation, and as a party that is deeply supportive of the agricultural industry, we in the Nationals WA believe that that needs to be considered for the whole of the state, not just in the Swan Valley Planning Bill. It is partly the inclusion of those matters in the bill that has drawn the interest of our party because we can see the importance of that for other areas, not just the Swan Valley itself.

I have not seen, and I do not know, whether the minister will explain exactly when the scheme is expected to begin in the Swan Valley following the bill presumably successfully passing this house and the other place. How long will that take to develop? It will be very interesting to see just how the objects in the bill are reflected and just how explicitly they are instructed by the bill in the development of the scheme. Will we see those specific objects reflected in words or are they intended to be reflected in some of the permitted uses and subdivisional aspects of the land itself? Will it be written as a separate text that people can easily grasp or will it just be implicit in the document itself and in the zoning and conditions of land use that are in that scheme when it is finally brought down? It will be interesting to see how that progresses. I suggest that it would be a good idea to, in some way, make a statement that is reflective of the objects in the future act and to make that quite clear in the scheme. That should help guide development, I think, into the future.

Yesterday, we heard the Speaker read a statement from the Governor approving appropriations for the bill. I will seek from the minister in the discussions that take place following the second reading debate, and perhaps during the consideration in detail stage, an understanding of the expected cost of the operation of the statutory planning and the Swan Valley strategic leadership group, and the other aspects of governance that will overlay the Swan Valley.

It is interesting that during the briefing we were told that the City of Swan is, I believe, supportive of this move, which will remove from its control a substantial area of land. I imagine it is a very important area of its rate base and its future development. That will be taken away from the city. The city itself will have only one member on the subcommittee of the Western Australian Planning Commission that will be the statutory planning committee involved in it. The city will, apparently, voluntarily cede its rights over this area. Perhaps that goes to show just how difficult it is to manage conflicting land uses and to make sure that everyone is satisfied with the development that takes place in the Swan Valley. The Swan Valley's strategic leadership group, which we are told will be a new advisory group, will have seven members appointed by the minister to provide advice on and advocate for the region. The bill is pretty explicit about what its powers and functions will be, but I would like to have more discussion about how that will be manifested and how that group will be able to influence the development of future schemes. I do not think it will be involved in the initial scheme, although I could be wrong. Presumably, the future scheme changes that we will see will be as a result of getting advice from this strategic leadership group.

How will we be sure that that group really represents the significant interests of the area? What priority will be placed on the opinions of people who reside in the area over the opinions of those who have business interests in the area or who just have some other dispassionate, technical expertise that they might be contributing to the group? It will be quite interesting to see that alternative community participation—that is, alternative to local government—in the formation of schemes. I understand that it will not be a group involved in deciding development applications et cetera, but more to ensure that the scheme and any policies that might wrap around it are developed in sympathy with the wishes of industry and the residents of the Swan Valley. It is an area of great interest to our party, because—as I said, I keep going back to this—the similarities between the Swan Valley and some of those areas just outside the metropolitan area that will come under similar pressures in the future. This could be an excellent way to see whether we could better guide the development of other areas of the state and ensure that agriculture remains viable on land that is very precious for its use. They are areas with good land, good climate, access to markets, access to labour and access to water. Hitting all those things is fairly rare. We are seeing difficulties with access to market in some of the more remote areas where fruit and vegetables are grown. Some of the things that have held back development on the Ord for a long time are access to markets, access to labour and access to that undefined element, which is the spirit of enterprise and people wishing to come in and have a go at developing an area. Those issues mean that areas just outside the metropolitan area play a very important role in more intensive types of agriculture and horticulture et cetera. I presume that what happens in the Swan will be a good guide to what happens in other areas.

I will leave the discussion at that point, but we will go through consideration in detail with these measures and I will be picking up some of the issues that are not been addressed in the minister's second reading reply.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe) [3.02 pm]: I rise to make a small contribution to debate on this Swan Valley Planning Bill 2020. As has been indicated by our lead speaker in this chamber, we support this bill.

The Swan is an area of Perth that I have a great affection for. I spent a significant part of my youth in the Swan Valley. I boarded at Swanleigh Hostel for five years and went to school at Hampton Senior High School in Morley. I can say it was a great place for someone from the bush to come to, because we were surrounded by farming. We could hear the big trucks going up and down Great Northern Highway, which was a great excitement to kids from the bush. We got to play and explore all through that area. One of our favourite places in full flood was Jane Brook. We would wash down in Jane Brook. We were clearly oblivious of the fact that we were imperilling our lives doing it, but it was wonderful fun. We had a scout troop there and we went all through the area. I can understand why the minister has great affection for that area, and I can understand why so many people in the community have such a great affection for it.

Another part of history in that area, which I am sure the minister is aware of and some members may also be, is that it is extremely significant for Aboriginal heritage for the very same reason that it was opened up very early for the early settlers, with early settlement and food production for the growing settlement on the Swan River—that is, the fertility of the soil and the availability of fresh water. That was the very same reason that Aboriginal people lived in the area. It would have been a transition area for Aboriginal people coming down from the wheatbelt to the coastal areas. Swanleigh was on what was the old Middle Swan Road, which is now on the corner of Reid and Great Northern Highways. Just over Great Northern Highway from that area there is quite a historic site that shows Aboriginal settlement in the area going back about 40 000 years. It is quite remarkable to have that record on the Swan coastal plain and the metropolitan area, and that is obviously a protected area. When I was doing my exploration down Jane Brook, at one stage I came across an Aboriginal family living in a completely traditional Aboriginal dwelling. It was a shelter constructed out of the bush, with grass tree matting on the floor. It was in the bush on the corner of Great Northern Highway, on Middle Swan Road. That was the first half of the 1970s, so even at that time there were Aboriginal people living quite a traditional lifestyle in that area, which I thought was absolutely remarkable when I was a boy in the place. As I say, I understand why the minister and the community have a passion about this.

It is really important that we maintain these communities. The comments made by the member for Moore about the preservation of productive agricultural soil resonate with me. Agricultural production depends on a couple of key factors. One is the fertility of the soil, although these days that is mitigated somewhat by the application of fertilisers, but there is no doubt whatsoever that maintaining our most naturally fertile and productive soils significantly reduces the need for the application of fertilisers. The other thing is rainfall. Some members here may be aware of this, but perhaps some are not. Rainfall changes very dramatically once we go over the hills. If we go about two or three kilometres just past the start of the hills, rainfall drops by about 500 millimetres; it is quite profound. The rainfall in the area down there in Middle Swan historically was around 1.2 metres a year, but we do not have to go very far back into the hills and it drops down to 500 or 600 millimetres a year. With the progressive drying of the climate those numbers have reduced a bit, but the effect is still the same. It is a great concern that we are building on our most productive soils, so the comments made by the member for Moore very much resonate with me.

I appreciate that for our cultural history, if you like, for maintaining some aspects of the heritage of white settlement and Aboriginal heritage, we need to protect that area, but it is equally important that we protect that productive

agricultural land, especially on the river where there are those fine, productive silty clay soils that are so good for growing grapes, but also good for growing a range of other horticultural products. I hope that this is looked at in more detail. I hear a lot of discussion in this place about what people did or did not do in the past. That is in the past. The only thing we can affect is what happens in the future. I hope that this bill heralds a greater focus by all of us in this place on maintaining that productive agricultural land, as I think it is under considerable threat. There is now almost complete infill of all the productive dairy country to the south of Perth. The area around Serpentine is also under considerable threat. I believe that, collectively, we should look at how the philosophy that the government and the minister have applied to this bill can be extended to also protect that productive agricultural land. That is particularly important as we get closer to the hills, which have not only better clay soils, but also very high rainfall. That is quite unique in the state, particularly in this southern part of Western Australia. Obviously the government is in power, and it is pretty confident that it will be in power for another four years, but hopefully that will be looked at collectively in the future by whoever is in power.

One aspect of the bill that I also hope will template into other areas is the degree of consultation that has occurred. I will not go through the second reading speech verbatim, obviously, but I note that the minister pointed out in detail the considerable amount of consultation that occurred. The minister said —

We wanted a consultative process to help shape a new reform strategy that considered all industries and aspects of the community.

The minister also said —

Over 700 Swan Valley residents, landowners, businesses and community groups provided feedback about their vision for the future and the identity of the region.

I applaud that consultation. It is important to get a range of views. However, I must say that I hope that will extend to other communities. One of my great concerns about the planning changes that have gone through this Parliament is that the compulsory consultation requirements were removed from the Planning and Development Act. I understand that the government intends to introduce regulations to prescribe how consultation will occur. I am concerned that we have not seen those regulations. I take the minister in good faith that she intends to introduce those regulations. The concept of extensive consultation with communities is very important. I know the politics in this place and that people have their own political agendas. However, I have noted that Dorothy Dixers are often asked in this place about planning matters in the western suburbs, some of which are in my electorate and some of which are not. The response to those questions has been to humiliate and ridicule the communities and councils that have expressed concern about proposed developments in their area. Consultation is a fundamental principle. I am not trying to cause controversy with those comments. I note and applaud the degree of consultation that has occurred on this bill, and I hope that will continue in other areas, whether that be a historic area like the Swan Valley, for which the minister and I and many people in Perth have a great affection and hope that it is preserved, or other communities in which people are concerned about the impact of proposed developments. I hope this will be a portent for ongoing and broad consultation with the community and for acknowledging the importance of that process.

I said this would be a brief contribution, and it will be. I support the bill. It is a good bill. I will not repeat the comments that have been made by our lead speaker, and by the member for Moore. I certainly hope that my hypothetical grandchildren—I have six kids, so I am hoping for some—will be able to enjoy the same Swan Valley that I enjoyed for five years of my younger life. Thank you.

MS J.J. SHAW (Swan Hills) [3.13 pm]: I rise today to speak in support of the Swan Valley Planning Bill 2020. In doing so, I would like to congratulate the Minister for Planning for her extensive body of work on this bill. The Swan Valley is very close to my heart. Some 30 years ago, my grandparents built their first home in Western Australia on Campersic Road, and I now live around the corner from there. I grew up in New South Wales, and I used to fly to nan and grandad's home for my summer holidays. I remember that when I was running around their place, I would think that when I grew up, I wanted to live there. I feel incredibly privileged that I now live in the Swan Valley. I am particularly privileged to represent that community.

The Swan Hills electorate currently incorporates Red Hill, Brigadoon, Upper Swan and Belhus. Following the redistribution, Middle Swan, Baskerville, Herne Hill and Millendon have come into the electorate. I want to take a bit of time today to explain to those constituents whom I now have the great fortune to represent my views on this bill. I have had a fair bit of outreach from people in the Swan Valley, asking for my thoughts on this bill, and, indeed, about the sorts of approaches that we need to take as a community towards the future of the Swan Valley. As I have said, I have, and will continue to have, an abiding interest in the Swan Valley. Last year, even before these parts of the Swan Valley were within my electorate, I worked with Councillor Charlie Zannino from the City of Swan, who is an outstanding representative of the Swan Valley—Gidgegannup ward, to have a chat about the Hanson Australia rock quarry operation at Swan Hill. We worked in conjunction with the Swan Valley Ratepayers and Residents Association, and I would particularly like to thank Jeff and Caroline Williams, and Bill Macham, for their advocacy on this issue, to reorient the operations of Red Hill quarry so that the quarry face would not break out into the Swan Valley. The risk was that the quarry face would open into this prime tourism and agricultural destination,

and that was not appropriate. I was very pleased to work with Councillor Zannino on that issue, and I thank the Swan Valley community for its support. I particularly thank Hanson for being community minded and acting with such goodwill as it engaged with me to completely reorient a major mining project. It was a great outcome.

The Swan Valley is an important part of the world, and this bill reflects that. This bill is a significant reconfiguration of the way in which we currently manage planning in the Swan Valley. The new act will repeal in its entirety the Swan Valley Planning Act 1995—which really does not work for our community—and replace it with a new act. The new act will provide a clear vision and regulatory mechanism for sensible land use planning consistent with the community in which we live, and a sensible approach towards development in the Swan Valley. It will also clarify the relationships between special legislative requirements applicable to the Swan Valley; establish a new Swan Valley statutory planning committee and a new Swan Valley strategic leadership group; and facilitate the development of a new Swan Valley planning scheme. I will go into those things.

It is important to acknowledge where this legislation has come from. The Swan Valley is obviously a very unique environment. It is based on the city's doorstep. We are very lucky to have so close to our city prime agricultural land, a beautiful tourism destination, and a place in which equestrian sports can be undertaken. We need to recognise and protect this unique rural environment. We also need to acknowledge that a residential area, Herne Hill, already exists in the Swan Valley, and provide for its future development, but in a sensible and measured way that will not encroach on the land uses that are core to making the Swan Valley the wonderful place that it is. The current act is incredibly complicated. It essentially provides for three levels of control. Those levels of control do not necessarily always align. That can make it incredibly difficult for members of the public and property owners in the area to navigate through those processes. Indeed, there are frequent conflicts.

Another thing to acknowledge is that this process has been attempted many times and has been fraught with controversy at times, but I think the process that has been stepped through has been really wonderful and has tried to accommodate the various not necessarily conflicting but competing views on how the Swan Valley should develop. The process commenced, and I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution of the late John Kobelke, who was appointed by the minister to review the proposals. He undertook an extensive consultation process, which other members have alluded to, about what should happen in the Swan Valley. He made a series of key recommendations about the need for a straightforward and streamlined process that cuts out red tape, gets rid of the three layers of planning to initiate a single layer that is easily navigated and understandable, and clarifies a lot of the ambiguous functions carried out by the Swan Valley Planning Committee. At the moment, the committee has a membership but it does not really have any teeth. It can make recommendations that the local government authorities may or may not take heed of and sometimes can confuse planning functions with the broader policy objectives of a strategic vision for the Swan Valley. It is very important to recognise that this bill separates and clarifies those two functions. The new strategic group will focus on important strategic matters for the Swan Valley without making individual planning decisions. I think it is very important that those two functions are separated.

I would like to cover several aspects of the way in which the bill is structured. I will say at the outset that I am going to cover only the issues that are confined to the parts of the Swan Valley that I have accountability for as the member for Swan Hills. I do not purport to comment on the western side of the Swan River. I want to make very clear that there is a very different set of considerations on the west side of the river as opposed to the east side. I will run through the definition of the Swan Valley, which is slightly different from the scope, I suppose, of the Swan Valley that I represent. I will touch on the objectives of the act, the way this scheme is created specific to the Swan Valley, the content of that scheme, the creation of the two groups—the strategic leadership group and the Swan Valley Statutory Planning Committee—and some other relevant matters.

First, under clause 4 of the bill, the Swan Valley is confined under schedule 1 to Middle Swan, Herne Hill, Millendon and Baskerville. Those are the only parts of my electorate in the Swan Valley that are covered by this bill. We are not broadening out into Brigadoon, Belhus or Upper Swan, which are other parts of my constituency. It is important to appreciate that point when we come to discuss what the outcomes of this legislation will mean for the way the Swan Valley will develop.

The objects of the act are to protect the Swan Valley as a productive agricultural area, which is very important; to maintain the rural character and conserve the heritage of the Swan Valley—it is a very rich and diverse community with a very proud migrant history, and it is very, very important that we recognise and acknowledge that—and to ensure that horticulture, viticulture, hobby farming and equestrian activities remain the principal land uses in the Swan Valley. That is so important. That is a deeply felt sentiment that has been expressed to me by my constituents. Another object is to discourage land uses in the Swan Valley that are incompatible with its rural character and ensure that tourism and hospitality conducted there is consistent with those objects. Sometimes proposals are put forward that are just not consistent.

Importantly, other than in the Herne Hill town site—I want to underscore this because it is a contentious issue in my electorate currently—we need to prevent new residential development in the Swan Valley except for single houses on single lots in keeping with the rural character of the Swan Valley. I cannot underscore enough how important that is for the Swan Valley. Another object of the act is to avoid overstocking, clearing of natural vegetation,

pollution and degradation. No doubt, my colleague the member for Thornlie will have a bit to say about the environmental stuff, so I may leave that to him today, and touch on other specific planning issues. The objective at clause 5(1)(h) is to protect the natural environment, which, again, I am sure the member for Thornlie will comment on. The objects of the bill then refer to the characteristics of the developments, including appropriate building setbacks, retention of vegetation, using suitable building materials and boundary fencing, and that if we do have any non-rural development in the Swan Valley, it is designed and located so as to reduce nuisance and other detrimental impacts. I think that is more likely to be in other parts of the Swan Valley as opposed to the eastern sections that I take care of.

Part 2 of the bill creates the Swan Valley planning scheme. Division 1 refers to the nature and effect of the scheme, and states that it is to be prepared and must give effect to the objects of the act. I think it is very important to appreciate that no matter what happens under this regime, everything must always be prepared and decisions taken in accordance with those objects. In particular, it is important that the object at clause 5(1)(f), which I discussed earlier, about the Herne Hill residential precinct, is considered when we are talking about the preparation of the Swan Valley planning scheme. The contents of the scheme must be consistent with the objects of the act. Basically, a plan will be created for the whole of the Swan Valley and then for each planning area. Provisions will be made about whether subdivision will be permitted in the planning areas; and, if it is permitted, a minimum lot size will be set out. Another key consideration is the provisions to ensure non-rural development is designed to minimise impacts from rural land users. When we talk about non-rural development, the definition in the bill is very clear. It means residential development, tourism and hospitality development or any other development that is not related to horticulture, viticulture, hobby farming or equestrian activities. We can look at residential development in the residential areas of Herne Hill, but it is inappropriate to allow non-rural development in the non-residential areas—the agricultural and horticultural areas and where equestrian activities occur.

I want to quickly speak to the establishment of the Swan Valley strategic leadership group. This is an overarching advisory group, if you like, to provide the minister with information on matters pertaining to the Swan Valley. It will have a presiding member and six other members and it will be a requirement that those members have practical knowledge or experience that is relevant to the functions of the Swan Valley strategic leadership group or are otherwise appropriate persons to represent the interests of Swan Valley residents and businesses. It contemplates people with a presence, who live or operate a business, in the Swan Valley. It is important to recognise that because they do not always necessarily correlate. The function of the leadership group is to provide information to the minister on matters relating to the Swan Valley, including how we protect it. That is a core issue that has come through to me from my constituents. How do we protect it as a productive agricultural region within the metropolitan area? How do we promote it? How do we market it? How do we celebrate the diverse range of horticultural operators, our viticulture, tourism, hospitality and hobby farming and equestrian activities? How do we enhance and protect the cultural heritage, built heritage, recreation landscape and values of the Swan Valley? That is quite different from making planning decisions about how land can be used, and I think it is very important to pull those two things apart. We can have a very fierce debate about the broader strategic issues, but in order to have an effectively functioning planning system, they need to be kept separate from the planning decisions that are actually taken. Indeed, clause 29(2) states —

It is not a function of the Swan Valley Strategic Leadership Group to provide advice or comments, or to prepare reports or other documents, in relation to particular applications for approval of subdivision or development in the Swan Valley.

That is entirely appropriate.

I want to flip to part 4, “Swan Valley Statutory Planning Committee”, which is a subcommittee, if you like, of the Western Australian Planning Commission. In the briefing I attended, it was described to me that members would be swapped out from the statutory planning committee for Swan Valley nominees. It will be chaired by someone approved by the minister and appointed under the Planning and Development Act. Five other people who are planning experts will be appointed by the commission. It is very important to emphasise that the planning committee will have planning experts on it. One other person will be appointed by the commission, with the approval of the minister, to represent the Swan Valley local government—at the moment that is the City of Swan—and then two other persons will be appointed by the commission with the approval of the minister to represent the interests of the Swan Valley residents and businesses. Again, people do not have to necessarily be a resident; they can have an interest in business. But the key point is that those people must have practical knowledge or experience relevant to horticulture, viticulture, cultural heritage, landscape protection, tourism, hospitality, hobby farming or equestrian activities in the Swan Valley, or be an otherwise appropriate person. The Swan Valley statutory planning committee will be populated by people who understand the valley and are in a position to make decisions. It will not be a body that sits there and tells the City of Swan what it thinks but at the end of the day is not in a position to make firm decisions or provide certainty. We need the Swan Valley flavour in the decision-making process.

The functions are outlined in clause 34. One of the interesting things to also appreciate with the establishment of the Swan Valley statutory planning committee, as a supplement to the typical statutory planning committee process, is that the existing Swan Valley planning committee and the City of Swan have monthly meeting cycles, which means

decisions can often take an incredibly long time to be made. Under this legislation, the new statutory planning committee will have a fortnightly meeting cycle, which can then be followed by a Swan Valley planning committee meeting at which decisions can be made. One level will make decisions more frequently, which it is hoped will make decisions far more timely and really fast-track processes for people in the Swan Valley, which is absolutely fantastic.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms J.J. SHAW: I want to touch on a few other matters that constituents have raised with me about the Swan Valley Planning Bill. The first issue is what will happen to applications that are currently in the planning system when no decision has been made. Some applications currently in the pipeline for development are not consistent with the land uses that are the objects of this bill. It is very important for me to put on the record that residential developments belong in residential areas, and I fully support the development of facilities that are residential in nature in areas such as Herne Hill. But I, as much as any other member of the McGowan government, think it is very important to protect the Swan Valley and the nature of that region and ensure that decisions that are taken in planning and new developments are consistent with preserving that nature. Clause 46 delivers on that. It provides that if an application has been made but has not been decided, the application is taken to be made and the decision on the application must be made in accordance with the Swan Valley planning scheme, rather than the relevant planning scheme. Anything that is in the pipeline right now will be decided under the provisions of this bill as long as it passes before a final decision is made. That is an important point to make and I wholly support it.

The other point to make is around water. The east side is a lot dryer than the west side and water is a hot topic. I have had all sorts of discussions around water licensing, water hoarding and making sure there is an efficient water market in place while also recognising that water is becoming more scarce. I have taken briefings from the Minister for Water and the Minister for Planning and staff about what arrangements are going to be made for water. A separate water market, if you like, designed for the Swan Valley will recognise the competing uses and the centrality of water to the functions identified in the bill, including horticultural, viticultural and equestrian pursuits. It is also important to acknowledge the functions that are taken up by the state. A lot of my constituents have had monitoring and enforcement issues, and a lot of those functions will not be performed by the City of Swan, but taken up by the state in conjunction with the City of Swan. Nonetheless, they will be taken up by the state and, hopefully, that will deliver my constituents the certainty that they need and give them some comfort that a lot of their issues will be addressed.

In short, this bill will streamline decision-making and considerably improve the planning process for the Swan Valley. It will ensure our local voices are heard and will protect what makes the Swan Valley such a special place to live, its essential nature, and all those activities that make it a beautiful place to live: the horticulture, viticulture and tourism that is consistent with that, hobby farming and equestrian activities. It will control subdivisions, so we will not have 300-square-metre blocks right throughout the valley. It will allow development in the Herne Hill town site where it is appropriate and will prevent residential development where it is not. That is an important point to underscore. It will ensure the protection of our beautiful natural environment, which I know the member for Thornlie will go into, and it is a culmination of a significant piece of work by the Minister for Planning, who, as the member for West Swan, has a considerable history, passion and commitment to this area. She really wants to make sure that our Swan Valley community receives the very best possible outcomes. I want to acknowledge the minister's work and the community members who engaged in such good faith through this process. I know at times it was fraught. There was some conflict and I am sure this will not be the last we hear about the competing issues in the Swan Valley, and the minister and I have had a number of conversations about those. But this gives us certainty, a better process and a better forum to think about those strategic issues that we need to consider as a community. It does not stop appropriate forms of development and allows a planning process to be undertaken. I fully support the bill and congratulate the minister on her excellent work.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Thornlie — Parliamentary Secretary) [3.37 pm]: I am very pleased to talk to the Swan Valley Planning Bill 2020 and offer my full support for it. I also congratulate the minister and government for developing such useful and important legislation. My interest in the Swan Valley Planning Bill 2020 stems from my past connection with the Swan Valley and also my interest in planning processes and how we can make those more open to contributions from community members to make our planning process as accessible as possible and open to the ideas of the community and to good planning decisions at the same time.

My history with the Swan Valley extends to Campersic Road in Herne Hill. I think I heard the member for Swan Hills say that she also had connections with Campersic Road. For me, that was in the 1970s and 1980s when we lived there on what I think was a 30-acre property. We were able to go through a whole range of rural pursuits, much as people still do to this day. I learnt to milk a cow. I learnt all sorts of animal husbandry methods and techniques on cattle, sheep and goats, and with various poultry as well. They were really important formative years. I guess, in many ways, it was an idyllic childhood growing up with an opportunity to appreciate where our food comes from. But there was always that question in my mind about how well we are managing the land around us and how sensible it is for us to bring in things such as fertilisers and put that on a paddock to generate our hay crop, and how useful or viable that production cycle would be in the long term.

I also have fond memories of the Swan Valley when I was grape picking on various properties. I remember working on the Moroni family's property. There was a wonderful Italian atmosphere of grape picking. I think it might have been for the vintage of 1981. I also remember doing some of the paid by the piece-type grape picking, which was incredibly badly paid even by those standards, and very hard work. I have had interesting experiences in the Swan Valley that have really crystallised for me the importance of that area to us.

What do we see today? We can make comparisons with other world-famous grape-growing horticultural regions, especially the viticultural or wine regions. I think it is fair to say that we have struggled to get coherent planning for the Swan Valley that then leads to the aesthetic of the area. I make the comparison with areas closer to my electorate, including Bickley Valley and Pickering Brook, and the south west or even further afield to the Barossa Valley, the McLaren Vale area and the Clare Valley, and even further afield to Bourgogne and the Rhône Valley. There is often coherence in the planning and the aesthetic in those areas. The right decisions have been made so that there is good viable land use and that people do not have the sense that they are momentarily passing a failed enterprise or endeavour. I still see that in the Swan Valley sometimes. People have acquired land because they had an idea about an interesting rural pursuit, but it did not go well, so we see at this time of year a paddock full of weeds, which is a sign of land mismanagement. That paddock full of weeds then becomes a fire risk, and because of the mismanagement, there is also the potential for soil erosion and perhaps overstocking or sometimes even understocking. It is just general mismanagement. This is one of the things that we have to face. When there are relatively small parcels of land, people who have interesting ideas but not necessarily any experience at managing land can make mistakes, and those mistakes can be costly to them. They end up with a property that is not particularly attractive and is hard to sell. There is also the sense of failure of an idea. As a community, we are left with a legacy; we are left with a parcel of land that is degraded and is often quite hard to re-establish as a viable going concern. Sometimes the big out clause that people reach for is to subdivide the land. If there is no potential for a hobby farming pursuit, they will just subdivide the land and take the money and run. This legislation will go a long way to addressing that. I hope that through this legislation, there will be protection from those poor decisions and people will not be able to pressure local councillors or put pressure on the process so that the land can be subdivided and they can get out of a situation that might have gone wrong in specific terms for their property.

As the member for Swan Hills and members opposite have said, we are talking about an area that has a very established tourism value because of its proximity to Perth. It has great aesthetic appeal. Again, I have highlighted some of my worries, but the Swan Valley is an area with great appeal. It is certainly right next to Perth and is very accessible for people. After the COVID era, we will be able to talk about people from overseas visiting the area. The Swan Valley is a nice place to take people. It has easy access and there are plenty of different eating opportunities, different types of wineries, different types of horticultural production and different types of business that add to the character. Again, we need to look at some overseas and interstate examples of coherence between boutique breweries, a chocolate factory, some vineyards and some paddocks. How will all that be managed so that there is financial viability but also a strong aesthetic appeal? That is very important and I hope that is something that the Swan Valley strategic coordination group is able to get its teeth into and it can set a broader vision and then demonstrate to people how a more coherent approach will have benefits for all.

I am interested in the use of the term "right to farm". That is becoming acceptable language. I have a concern that that notion extends from the very American notion of the right to bear arms, so I wonder whether that is the right terminology. I know it is an ideal that people have, but it has to be met with certain controls. I have already touched on the example of land that has been mismanaged because someone has had a great idea but it turned out to be one that was not well advised and was not suitable for the parcel of land that they wanted to undertake the activity on. That is something that I wanted to touch on.

I also pay tribute to the work of the late John Kobelke, who was a mentor to me in my early days in this place. I acknowledge that with his usual rigour, amazing capacity to have a vision and attention to detail, John certainly did some great preparatory work for this legislation. His work is a great foundation for this bill to be built upon.

We often hear about tourists' visits to various wineries in the valley, and they enjoy that and gain a lot from it, but there is a need to make sure that traffic access ways in the valley are worked on in this planning process. At the moment, the area on the eastern side of the river is dominated by two major thoroughfares, Great Northern Highway and West Swan Road. As a tourism area, the idea of riding bikes around the Swan Valley is particularly appealing, but it is not very pleasant for people cycling along those roads, but not so much from a safety point of view, because both roads have reasonable-sized shoulders. Even though road trains and high-speed traffic drive past cyclists, they feel reasonably safe; it is just unpleasant, as they are busy roads that generate a lot of traffic buzz. The east-west roads are pleasant to cycle along. There is a difficulty in making sure that we have very "cyclable" east-west roads.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup interjected.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: I think I know exactly where the member is referring to on West Swan Road.

Ms J.J. Shaw: The poles are now painted yellow.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: More can be done to improve them, but we have to do something about the overall relationship between the east–west roads and the north–south roads. That is the key thing. Cycling is a very pleasant way for people to visit the valley and it is certainly consistent with the flavour in other wine regions in the world, including the Barossa Valley, Clare Valley and McLaren Vale. They have managed to embrace it, yet somehow separate those very busy thoroughfares. Perhaps it is by dent of history that Great Northern Highway runs through a key part of the Swan Valley, so we have to deal with that.

I am very pleased to support this legislation. The role of the coordinating group and the statutory planning committee will be important. The legislation will have to work with other important pieces of legislation, including the Environmental Protection Act. Referrals to the Environmental Protection Authority will need to be fully respected when there is a matter of environmental significance, and that is dealt with in clause 26, “Approval of scheme or amendment referred to EPA”. I feel reassured by that, although sometimes matters of great community significance may not necessarily be those that the Environmental Protection Authority sees as particularly major and therefore worthy of a referral. The EPA may say that such matters should be dealt with at the local government level. Those are the sort of cases in which there is a fair degree of community angst because people feel that their referral to the EPA is not properly treated and formally assessed. That is not unique to the Swan Valley; it is across the whole community.

The Swan Valley Planning Bill 2020 will go a long way towards clarity of vision and decision-making for the Swan Valley. The statutory planning committee will make a series of decisions that will add up to a whole, which will lead to an attractive Swan Valley, one that we can all be proud of. In some ways it will deal with the issue of poor land management, which we seek to avoid. A more prosperous and successfully planned Swan Valley will result in better investment and rehabilitation of some of the areas where things have gone wrong. That is a challenge for us, but the leadership group will look at the vision and how investment in the area can be designed to create the coherence that will very much be welcomed by the broader Swan Valley community.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Planning) [3.51 pm] — in reply: I thank everyone for their support for, and comments on, the Swan Valley Planning Bill 2020. I particularly thank the member for Dawesville as the Liberal Party lead spokesperson, the member for Moore and also my colleagues the members for Swan Hills and Gosnells.

Mr C.J. Tallentire: Thornlie.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I keep wanting to say Gosnells.

The SPEAKER: Shame. Fancy forgetting a member’s electorate—like I do every day!

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I always think it is Gosnells. Perhaps it is because I see the member so often in Gosnells. We do not venture into Thornlie much together. The member ventures into Thornlie, but I do not.

I thank members very much for their comments. This issue has been the subject of much discussion and debate for many, many years. The bill provides for a much simpler, but clearer, governance structure, which will result in better planning decisions into the future. There is no doubt that there is a lot of detail in the scheme. We are finalising the final draft of the scheme, which will go out very soon. I do not think it will contain any surprises for anyone in the valley, but it will help everyone understand what will and what will not be permitted in key parts. This bill is about protecting and valuing a beautiful part of Western Australia. Members have already highlighted its proximity to the city centre, its very strong Aboriginal history, its strong history of European settlement and its role in providing grapes, wine and other produce to Western Australians. It is a unique and beautiful place in this world. I recently briefed the Swan Valley and Regional Winemakers Association on the bill and its members seemed to be receptive to its provisions. We have had positive feedback across all elements of the community. The member for Moore talked about the right to farm, which has been of interest to people in the valley and to those in horticulture and agriculture more generally. The bill is an understanding that in some areas, particularly in agricultural areas, certain activity can cause disturbance. Most of us find it quite interesting when someone moves into a longstanding activity, such as an orchard or a farm, and then they become concerned with activities that relate to spraying, tending to the crop, picking, harvesting—those types of activities. For those people who move into this area—this is set out in the scheme—this bill acknowledges that some activities are different from a normal residential subdivision. That is part of living in a rural and farming community. That is a key issue. Another key and constant issue is water management. There are differing levels of water access in different parts of the valley but, again, access to water will be considered as part of the work being done by the Minister for Water. The time frame for finalising that work is mid–next year, understanding that the Swan Valley area is of significant importance in assessing water needs. As I said, there has always been a lot of discussion and debate about this issue. I am very proud to get the bill into this house. Hopefully, we will see a speedy assessment of the bill and hopefully the upper house will consider it in a quick time frame. We would like this bill passed by the end of this year, ideally in November. We hope the scheme, which is being prepared, will be completed within the same time frame. We believe that it will give great certainty and confidence to people in the area.

The member for Dawesville asked a question about the activities of the leadership group versus the statutory planning committee. Perhaps he will raise it again during the consideration in detail stage. There are always a lot of ideas in the valley. For example, there has been a push by some to have a Swan Valley post code because when people google “Swan Valley” it does not come up with an area. Unlike Margaret River, which is an actual suburb, the Swan Valley is a collection of places—it is an identity rather than a suburb. There has always been a concern that the Swan Valley does not have a true identity and when it is googled, there is no pinpoint that says “Swan Valley”. There are a number of ideas about how to approach that. One is to name a location Swan Valley, whether it be a corner of the area or a particular place. Another has been to rename one of the suburbs—for example, Herne Hill—to Swan Valley. Yet another is that we rename suburbs in the area to include Swan Valley in the name. For example, Caversham, Swan Valley. People have different views and the suggestions are fraught with different problems. That is one of the first tasks and it is a tricky one, but I will ask the leadership group to consider how we can improve the identity of the Swan Valley. A lot of work has been done on other aspects, such as the visitor centre. There is now an agreement to keep the visitor centre in Guildford, because it is a bottom suburb of the valley. There was a lot of talk about potentially moving it and creating a new centre. There has been talk of an Aboriginal cultural centre. These are broader policy decisions about the valley that the leadership group will consider and advise the minister as opposed to planning decisions. As a result, as I said, I will be going into a bit more detail in consideration in detail. I really appreciate all the comments. This is a commitment we gave that I would really like to see done by the end of this year and this term. As I said, I think it will go very much towards protecting the area and supporting the agriculture and viticulture of the area. I thank everyone for their nice comments.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Leave denied to proceed forthwith to third reading.

CITY OF MELVILLE — INQUIRY

Motion

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton) [4.00 pm]: I move —

That this house calls on the Minister for Local Government to establish an inquiry into the City of Melville council regarding conflicts of interest and improper leasing and use of council property.

Under his reign, the minister has undertaken or commissioned a whole raft of inquiries into various cities. Of course, there have been inquiries into the City of Melville and the City of Perth. I understand that the City of Subiaco and the Town of Cambridge are currently under inquiry. In that process, the minister has set the bar for an inquiry. I argue—I will go through this—that the actions that have been taken by the council of the City of Melville on the Melville Bowling and Recreation Club meet those criteria and the bar for an inquiry. Indeed, I think there is evidence that there needs to be an inquiry into whether the council has made an improper decision regarding a very valuable council asset, against the wider interests of the ratepayers, in violation of local by-laws and principles, and, more widely, against the principles of good government as enunciated in the minister’s inquiry into the City of Perth.

For some time, like most councils, the City of Melville has been trying to deal with the renewal of assets that are in decline, specifically bowling clubs. For a while, it has been confronting the issue of a decline in membership and in the assets of, in particular, the Mount Pleasant Bowling Club and the Melville bowling club. That is accepted. Something needs to be done—that is also accepted—and it is reasonable that the current council is trying to address that, at least in part. The council had a strategic plan. The proposal was, of course, to merge the two clubs and build a new asset at Tompkins Park, and the proposal of the previous council was to fund this move through a wave park, which was to be built on the location of the current Melville bowling club. That is out; that was stopped—that is not the debate—but the issue of what to do with the existing bowling clubs still remains. It is a valid issue that is not unique to the City of Melville; a number of other bowling clubs in the area also have other issues. The relevance of the wave park proposal is that it showed that the land on which the Melville bowling club stands is highly valued if used for purposes other than a bowling club. Indeed, my understanding is that if the wave park were to have gone ahead, it would have provided the City of Melville \$1 million a year clear in rent for the land, noting that most of the land is owned fee simple or outright by the City of Melville. It is a very valuable asset.

During the kerfuffle, the debate about the wave park gave rise to a lot of discussion in the community and interest from a number of entities. Two groups are particularly relevant to this issue as they highlight problems of conflict of interest—that is, the Swan Foreshore Protection Association, which is a registered charity, and the Alfred Cove Action Group, which is not a registered charity. Both of these groups have stated that one of their purposes and functions is to stop the wave park, which they have succeeded in doing, and to keep the Melville bowling club where it is. The two groups have raised a substantial amount of money; indeed, over the two years, the Swan Foreshore Protection Association has raised and spent over \$120 000. We do not know how much money was raised by the action group. We do know that, during the election, these two clubs combined gave donations to the tune of \$17 000 to people running for council; that is declared on the Register of Electoral Gifts on the website of the City of Melville.

We also know that the Melville bowling club was very active and campaigned for George Gear, the now mayor, who is a member of the club. The club not only stated repeatedly that it supported him, but also put advertisements all over the front of the club. That is an important point: George Gear, the mayor, is a member of the club—a social member, not an active member—and the club campaigned heavily for Mr Gear.

On the twenty-first of last month, during an ordinary meeting, a proposal was put to the council for a new lease for the bowling club. Generally, the policy of the City of Melville has been to give five plus five, or 10-year leases. The bowling club was on a short-term lease because of the proposed amalgamations, but it was reasonable to give it a new lease, and a 10-year lease—five plus five—would have been reasonable. The proposal that was put goes way beyond those principles. The proposal was submitted to the administration of the council on the seventeenth, the Friday before the meeting on the twenty-first, giving the administration inadequate time to consider it, although the administration did give its views. What was proposed was not a five plus five or 10-year lease, but effectively a 50 plus 49 or 99-year lease for the property. Also, the proposed lease expanded the current footprint to include an adjacent car park. This car park is very large. It has been used by many people in the community, not only the bowling club, but also more widely used, and the lease proposal is to give the Melville bowling club rights over the car park, although the council will be required to maintain it.

Also—this is very interesting—part of the concern about the wave park was that it would obscure or use crown land on the foreshore. As members know, this government did not contribute that land to the wave park, and that is what ultimately stopped it. As part of this lease, the landlord, that is the city, is to undertake to give the lessee, that is the Melville bowling club, the portion of the crown reserve in front of the bowling club, and that area not be leased, developed or have improved structures placed on the site. In other words, it basically expanded the bowling club's footprint to include the foreshore and the crown land on the foreshore. Importantly, the lease expands the potential use of the land and of the bowling club for purposes other than that which it is currently zoned, which is as parks and recreation. One reason for the wave park fitting in was that it was presumed to be parks and recreation. The expanded zoning is to include licensed bars, TABs, restaurants, function and conference centres and office space. In other words, the lease expands the use beyond its current level. This proposal was submitted without a business plan, without community consultation and without an assessment being done into the governance of Melville bowling club. I might add that Melville bowling club has been turbulent over the past few years. It has not been a settled club. Any local member knows that the quality of the maintenance of those clubs can go up and down. If we use the wave park to make a valuation of this asset—the land is fee simple—it is worth, in a commercial sense, in the vicinity of \$25 million. The advice from the executive was to not sign the lease—do not do it. It issued a whole range of concerns. In particular, the proposed lease terms by the club had been considered by the city and they do not align with the terms applied to other bowling and sporting clubs that lease the city's assets. The proposed terms are excessive for a lease of this nature and, if agreed, it would effectively represent the equivalent of transferring freehold ownership of land and buildings to a club at no cost. The cost agreed to in this lease, without indexation, is for \$100 a year for this whole parcel of land, which is pushing for hectares of prime foreshore land. In addition, the city's chief executive has delegation limits applicable to leases and the leasing of city assets. Under that delegation, the maximum lease term is 10 years. In other words, this lease exceeds the delegated authority of the chief executive. Further, any proposed new lease has minimum statutory requirements that need to be complied with before being approved. That is, the lease must be registered with Landgate, which it is not; the new lease disposal requires public consultation, yet there has not been any; the restricted use of the site is for parks and recreation, yet the lease allows for uses beyond parks and recreation; and, any ground lease that has a term of 20 years or longer requires Western Australian Planning Commission consent, and that has not been achieved.

This advice was ignored and the majority of the Melville council voted to approve the lease and send it to review to be negotiated with the Melville bowling club with the decision to be finalised next week at the council's regular meeting. During the voting period, the various councillors were required, of course, to state whether they had a financial interest. If they had a financial interest, under the by-laws of the City of Melville, they should exit the room and not vote. I put to members that each one of the councillors who voted in favour of the lease had a commercial interest and had received funding from action groups and charities whose function, if not sole function, was in fact to keep the bowling club where it is. The mayor is a member of this club. That is well known. The club was being given, if my evaluation is right, an asset worth many millions of dollars for fee simple in perpetuity. That is what the administration warned the council about. In addition, the club could lease the asset for commercial use and the benefits of that leased asset would go to the club. The mayor was supported by the council and the bowling club in his campaign. He is a member of the club. This lease gives that club a multimillion-dollar asset for the benefit of the club members, including the mayor himself. None of them reported or declared a financial interest. They stayed and voted. That is clear evidence that something is not right in the City of Melville.

A number of them declared an impartiality interest. They did have impartiality. They had a long-term association with the bowling club and had argued for a long time that the bowling club should remain where it is at. Under the recent advice from the Department of Local Government, councillors have to declare an impartiality interest and, once declared, they can stay and vote, and that is what the councillors did, except for one; Mr Pazolli declared an impartiality interest and he left the room and did not vote. However, Paul Murray, an excellent journalist for a long

time in Western Australia, wrote in *The West Australian* that there have been recent legal interpretations following a case that went through the Supreme Court in 2019 called the Dain case. That case adds a different flavour to the current or past local government advice on impartiality interests. That is the additional principle of apprehended bias. Put simply, if a counsellor, in this case, has a position that can reasonably be perceived to be made out as being a formal decision—that is, he or she is not impartial to the decision and has already made his or her views clear—they should vacate the room and not vote. Clearly, each of the councillors who voted for the lease have an apprehended bias. They have repeatedly stated that they support not only the details of the lease and the renewal of the lease, but also for the bowling club to remain. Importantly, the advice under the Dain case is that if one person who had an apprehended bias—let us say it is the mayor, who clearly did—voted and was the determinant decision when the vote was split and the mayor voted for it, which is the case, the whole lease falls apart. To me, that is quite clear evidence that not only is there justification for an inquiry into the City of Melville, but also that there is a serious malfunction in the current city's make-up.

I would like to go back to the precedent that the government set for itself involving the City of Perth when there was not only an inquiry into the City of Perth, but also the government sacked the City of Perth.

Mr D.A. Templeman: That is not actually true.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Everyone was stood down.

Mr D.A. Templeman: They were suspended. They were never sacked.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: The government suspended the City of Perth on indications of improper behaviour.

Mr D.A. Templeman: For a range of matters.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: It was for a range of matters. Tony Power, who conducted the inquiry, wrote —

In the Inquiry's view it is clear, —

This is one of the major criticisms of the city —

that some council members, although they generally disclosed impartiality interests, were prepared to actively promote organisations and events they had a personal interest in to assist them to receive funding from the City. This active promotion included voting, in Committee and Council Meetings.

This is exactly what the Melville council has done in this case with this unprecedented lease. As I indicated, there was no business case or community consultation. The terms and the nature of the lease are unprecedented in Western Australia. It has sent shockwaves around many hundreds of community groups, particularly bowling clubs, many of which are struggling, concerning impartiality and unfair treatment. The mayor has been asked by numerous other groups, Mount Pleasant Bowling Club for one, "What about us? Can we have equal 99-year leases?" The mayor said absolutely not. He said that no-one else would get such leases except the Melville Bowling and Recreation Club. A petition has been put forward with almost 200 signatures asking the mayor to reconsider the terms of the lease and to go back to 10 years, which is the standard policy. That will be considered by the City of Melville next week at its regular meeting, but the mayor has indicated in the press that it will not make any difference, because the decision has already been done. In other words, he has stated that occurred prior to the consideration of a petition by the community. Many members are very active and involved in the City of Melville. Almost 200 signatures were on the petition asking the mayor to reconsider the extent of the lease and to go back to the established policy, the policy that applies to all other similar groups, bowling clubs and otherwise, and it will be considered by the council, but the mayor has stated publicly that it will make no difference because the decision is done and final. In other words, he is pre-empting the decision. Again, there are no deals for other clubs.

This is a very serious issue. There has been a long history to this decision, and there has been a huge amount of money, much of which has flowed into that campaign. The wave park was one of the costs. I am not going to fight on the wave park. It is done; the decision has been made. But that does not justify what has been done in this case. I turn to an article in the *Melville Gazette*. When the representative of the bowling club was asked, he said the club was overwhelmed about the result, but it is what it expected. It gave George Gear strong support for his campaign to be mayor and that is the result. In other words, the Melville bowling club stated for the record that the long-term 99-year lease, including the parking lot, the crown land, the zoning and rezoning, and use of the park was simply payback for its support for George Gear during the campaign. If that is not a commercial interest that should have been declared, and that should have prevented the mayor from voting on the question, then one does not exist. The City of Melville needs to respond. Clearly, there is enough evidence to say that all is not right. It might have explanations for the behaviour that might be justified in the end. At the very least, there needs to be an urgent inquiry into it. The minister should apply the bar for an inquiry that he has applied to, let us say, the City of Melville in the past, when he undertook an 18-month inquiry on the basis that there had been many, many hundreds of complaints about the local government in Melville. I think at one time over a two-year period there were 700 complaints. But, as the inquiry found, most of them were generated by a small cadre of people. Many of them were vexatious in the extreme and they were undermining the functioning of what was one of the best run councils in the state. But that is the past. Now we have a set of decisions through which the City of Melville has given a multimillion dollar asset

to a club and allowed it to monetise it if it so wishes without any business plan, restrictions on the use of the club, restrictions on the flow of money from the proceeds of the club or restrictions on the activities of the club. This club was given this lease without even the requirement for it to remain a bowling club. It could turn into a brewery for all we know. Importantly, even though members of the club cannot take a pecuniary interest in its operations, under this lease they are allowed to sublease the facility, the land, for a whole range of purposes—cafes, businesses, pubs or clubs. That does not prevent them from taking an interest in the lease arrangements. There is also no oversight of that. This is the club's land for 99 years. It can do with it what it wishes. If the lease is verified next week, Melville has given over the land to this group without any controls over it, and that is inappropriate.

I ask the minister to look at this evidence, to make inquiries into the City of Melville, and, if they are justified, which I strongly believe they will be, to undertake an immediate inquiry into the City of Melville and ask it to desist with this lease. There is no urgency. It can be put on month to month for a time until the inquiry gets to the bottom of the decisions. If the lease is validated and finalised next week and the land is handed over to the group that currently manages the bowling club, the minister's inquiry should have the ability to put a desist order on the lease to ensure it is not validated until the minister has adequate time to undertake an inquiry. This has serious ramifications, not only for the ratepayers of the City of Melville, but all communities. As local members, we all deal on a daily basis with community groups such as bowling clubs that are often struggling with tired assets, declining memberships, the need for regeneration and, in the case of bowling clubs, the shift from turf to artificial lawn. We all do that, and we often have multiple clubs and we have to treat them fairly, impartially and objectively. This decision to give a single club, which was proposed to merge with another one in Mount Pleasant that was left out, an arrangement, with the mayor telling all the other clubs in Melville that they could not have the same one because he is associated with that particular club, sets a standard that undermines our ability to support the many valuable clubs and facilities in our community and to support local governments, which, in the main case, are required to finance and oversee these assets. This is a very dangerous precedent being set for us, local governments generally and particularly the ratepayers of Melville. It requires the minister's action and I ask him to act.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Local Government) [4.28 pm]: I thank the member for Riverton for his grievance this afternoon in private members' business! I just want to go through in responding, highlight a couple of things and make them very clear. Then, I want to talk generally about declarations of impartiality. I also want to highlight some inconsistencies in the member for Riverton's views and aspirations for the City of Melville.

Can I very clearly highlight that the minister has a power to initiate an authorised inquiry. However, more generally, authorised inquiries are initiated essentially by the director general of the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage. In the case of the authorised inquiries that occurred during the time of the McGowan government, it is important to note the following. I will go through them. There was the inquiry into the Shire of Wiluna; the inquiry into the City of Melville, which was initiated in November 2017 and concluded in June 2019; the inquiry into the Shire of Perenjori, which was initiated in January 2018 and concluded in July 2019; and the inquiry into the Shire of Carnarvon, which was initiated in January 2018 and concluded in October 2019. There was also the inquiry into the City of Perth, which was a panel inquiry. That is a judicial process, as the member is aware, in which the inquiry is conducted by an appointed panel inquirer. The director general has also initiated inquiries into the City of Joondalup, the Town of Cambridge, the City of Mandurah, the Shire of Toodyay, the City of Cockburn, the City of Subiaco, the Shire of Coolgardie and the Shire of Mingenew. The last five inquiries—Toodyay, Cockburn, Subiaco, Coolgardie and Mingenew—are ongoing.

It is important to note with regard to authorised inquiries that local governments have the legislative authority to make, and should make, decisions in an impartial, objective and transparent way. There is no doubt about that. That is true. Those decisions should always be made in the best interests of the community. This includes decisions that relate to a range of matters that come before councils. They may be, as the member for Riverton highlighted in the case of the City of Melville, about a lease issue, or a range of other issues that come before councils.

The member quoted the City of Perth inquiry report. That report detailed that —

A local government, as the term suggests, should fairly and faithfully represent the community it governs. It should do so in the best interests of the community as a whole, not just part of it.

Elected members must ensure that they give genuine and appropriate consideration to materials, reports and submissions when voting. However, I need to highlight to the member that that does not mean, of course, that they will always agree with a recommendation by the chief executive officer or an officer of the council. I refer to a debate that we had in this place recently, and to the comments of the member for Riverton's colleague the member for Churchlands. The member for Churchlands referred to the Town of Cambridge, which is subject to court action at this stage, so I cannot make comment. His argument focused on the suggestion that the decisions of the elected members must prevail. Therefore, I am a little perplexed. The member for Riverton has essentially said in this debate tonight that the city should follow the advice of the administration. The member for Riverton also referred to the City of Perth report and recommendations. As the member knows, councils are democratic institutions by virtue of the statutory law that oversees them, namely the Local Government Act. Councillors make decisions,

as elected members, based on the information provided to them. This is one of the perplexing issues. At a recent function, a local government councillor from the western suburbs said to me that they have no power. He said that too much power rests with the administration. That is an age-old argument. It has been going on for a long time. That is one of the reasons that there has been a move in the other place, sadly, to disallow some changes that we have proposed to regulation 9. Those changes are focused on, and are reflected in, the recommendations in the City of Perth report, to succinctly clarify who is responsible for operational matters in the council—namely, the chief executive officer—and the role and responsibilities associated with local government elected members.

On the one hand, in a debate in this place not that long ago, I was castigated and yelled at by the member for Churchlands—as he tends to do—for not allowing the decisions of the elected members in a particular council in his electorate district to prevail. However, the member for Riverton, in his comments today, suggested that because a recommendation in a report was not followed by a chief executive officer, that recommendation should prevail over the decision of the elected members.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The member did say that in his contribution.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The member has had his chance.

Dr M.D. Nahan: I said that the council did not follow due process.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Councils have a responsibility to follow process. The first question I would ask is: has the member formally made a complaint—because he can—to the chief executive officer or the department about those matters? If there are issues around process, I would expect that we would have received a series of complaints. My understanding is that we have not. I am interested that the member has taken up this matter. The member has every right to do that. I am not saying that the member has not raised a serious concern or allegation. However, I would have thought that we would have a growing number of complaints. On the other hand, the member then criticised me and said that in the inquiry into the City of Melville, we should not have relied upon a complaint. The member is sort of cherry-picking when he needs to and when he feels like it. The member needs to have some logic to his argument. Just two months ago, the member for Riverton called on me to have an inquiry into the City of Fremantle, and he used the City of Melville as an exemplar council that Fremantle should follow.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The member for Riverton is all over the place on this. That is the problem. Let us look at the member's comments in the *Fremantle Herald* of 27 June 2020. The member said —

Former WA Opposition leader Mike Nahan has told WA Parliament there needs to be an inquiry into Fremantle council.

Claiming only Liberal-leaning councils were being subjected to the blowtorch by the McGowan government, Mr Nahan said Fremantle's finances were in disarray.

...

Mr Nahan then went on to sing the praises of Melville council, saying it had managed to freeze its rates this year.

But like many others ... he'd simply botched the math.

Melville is actually increasing its rate in the dollar by around 13 per cent in order to maintain its rate take ...

Despite that, Mr Nahan was unrepentant.

"The simple fact is the City of Melville is reducing the rates burden for its ratepayers because it has the financial capacity and the will to do so," ...

Just two months ago, the member for Riverton had high praise for the City of Melville, and was calling on me to launch an inquiry into the City of Fremantle. I am not sure whether the member took up the offer from the Mayor of the City of Fremantle, Dr Pettitt, to meet with the council. Did the member have a chance to meet with the council?

Dr M.D. Nahan: No.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: That was back in June. The article goes on to say —

Dr Pettitt told the Herald he'd written to the Riverton MP and offered to bring down Freo's CEO to "clear up the errors in his speech. The city is not broke—we are investing more than ever before in improving Fremantle," Dr Pettitt said.

The member for Riverton throws barbs out there, but then he does not follow up. The member has parliamentary privilege. He can use that. He has chosen to use that today and previously, but he should follow up. The member for Riverton is a man of process—I actually like him—but he does not follow his own standards.

Let me go through this. Of course, an authorised inquiry into the City of Melville was established by the director general in late 2017. The department did not do that suddenly. In the 12 months prior, which was the last year of the member's term of government, the department had been working with the City of Melville to improve its complaints processes in relationships with the community. A range of issues had been building up with the City of Melville prior to even the McGowan government coming to power, which led to an authorised inquiry being announced in late 2017. The member in his opening remarks highlighted the issues around the wave park site and those matters. Of course, in any election campaign, as the member correctly highlighted, a range of issues become litmus tests for elected members and those who seek to be elected. I do not think there is any denial of that. That is what happens. We will be doing it and are doing it now in terms of our jurisdiction in the lead up to the March 2021 election. I supported the director general's decision to launch an authorised inquiry into the City of Melville. The member did not support that inquiry. He said in this place that he thought it was a waste of time and everything else. The member did not support the authorised inquiry into the City of Melville despite the fact that during his term of government, particularly in the last year or so, it had been highlighted that issues were brewing and troubles occurring. Now, the member came into this chamber today and said that. To my understanding there have been no formal complaints about this issue lodged with the department. But the member has every right to do that. If the member genuinely believes that there are some issues here, I encourage him to do that, because that is a right. I would encourage anyone in the City of Melville to do the same. I am a little surprised that they have not at this point in time.

It is interesting to note that when the City of Melville inquiry was finally announced in 2017, essentially, it was supported by the City of Melville itself—by the CEO and by the elected members. I am a little puzzled that the member is happy to call on me to act on a range of councils, including the City of Fremantle; he did not agree with the City of Melville inquiry, but wants me to inquire into it now based upon some evidence that he alleged this afternoon—which is his right to do in private members' business.

I want to go through the importance of regulation 9. I was very disappointed to hear that there has been a motion to disallow regulation 9 in the other place. I will be very clear about this. The member for Roe would know this—he is nodding to me—because he has made complaints to me about this issue previously. Where a lot of councils get into trouble—the City of Perth panel inquiry and the inquirer found this very clearly—is that there is not only a lack of understanding, but also divergence of role and responsibility. The problem is the interference of local government elected members in operational matters. That is a key issue that was highlighted in the City of Perth inquiry. I refer again to the councillor who said to me, "I'm powerless. I can't do anything." The fact of the matter is that it is council members who make decisions and vote on things. Council members are supported and have reports presented to them, but essentially they make the decision. No-one holds their hand to force it up or down when they are asked to make decisions. They make the decision. If they do not inform themselves properly about a decision, they can defer it or seek more information. Council members make decisions on strategic planning and set the strategic direction, and they vote on the budget. I said to the councillor, "I'm sorry, but you obviously don't understand the powers you have. You are the one who sets the rates and the council's budgetary decisions." I find it quite perplexing that the councillor said that they were powerless. In some ways, I think that is used possibly as an excuse, and that is wrong. I have always said to members, "If you don't want to make decisions, don't become a councillor. I'm sorry, but that is my view." For the same reason, if a person stands to come into this place, they should not say, "I don't want to make a decision." That is a fundamental aspect of democracy.

I was very concerned to hear that in the other place there has been a motion to disallow the reg 9 changes, which were gazetted on 14 August 2020. I hope that the opposition does not follow through on the threat to disallow the regulations.

Mr P.J. Rundle: They're too heavy handed.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: We are happy to brief the member on why. Too heavy handed—we are clarifying. If members do not want to support that, that is fine, but do not come bleating and complaining when councils start getting into trouble because there is a blurring of role and responsibility and their understanding of that. If we look at a number of issues that have been highlighted in local government over the last number of years, we see a common theme in many of them, including that lack of adherence to an understanding of the delineation between role and responsibility. We are going through local government reforms. We have done a number of them, and I am very proud of what we have achieved in our three years and six months in government. I do not need to go through them. We have issues that relate to auditing. We now have an auditing system. The Auditor General has a role now in the financial audits of local governments. They have a responsibility in performance audits. We now have capacity for the Minister for Local Government to deal with individual councils, rather than having to deal with essentially corrosive behaviour and that the current act constrained the minister of the day. But the bar is still set high in terms of thresholds. I get accused of it being too high. People say to me, "We should be able to do this. Why can't you sack them?" One of the common themes in what people say is, "Why don't you just sack them?" Why? Is it because they do not like them or perhaps because they do not hold the same views? We have to have a process in place.

I hope members opposite understand why we moved to address the issues around the regulation 9 changes. Reg 9 highlights the need to remove the ability of the council either by a decision of councillors or the CEO's authorisation to undertake an administrative task. We cannot have elected members interfering with the operational aspects of the council.

Mr P.J. Rundle: Under your regulation, a shire councillor can't even collect money at the shire barbecue.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): Excellent, member for Roe.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am happy to have a conversation about that. Is the member prepared to come to one of our briefings? Come to the briefing and we will explain the reasoning. I ask the member to read the City of Perth report in its entirety. Everyone, whether they are a Lord Mayor aspirant, a local government elected member going for election in the councils having elections in October—in Perenjori, Port Hedland, the City of Perth and a couple of others —

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The member needs to read the report. Has the member read the report?

Mr P.J. Rundle: Some of it.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Has the member read the recommendations?

Mr P.J. Rundle: Yes.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Has the member read the findings —

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister, he is waiting for the film.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: It would be an interesting film.

The member for Riverton quoted Mr Powers. The inquiry highlighted issues around the delineation of roles, with responsibilities being one of the key issues. We are moving to address that. The member for Roe does not want to address it, which reflects the lack of any action of his side on local government legislation. They had no guts to do anything, apart from his good friends the Liberal Party, which decided the best way to reform local government was to force amalgamations. But in its time in government, the Nationals WA did nothing in local government. We have tried to reform; it is not difficult. I will be honest with members: I thought we would be able to reform the Local Government Act 1995 in a couple of years and have a new one in. I was wrong, because it is such a complex issue when dealing with local democracy, identity and people wanting to handle autonomy about decision-making for their own community. But I want to keep going. I am not going to give up, because we need to reform our Local Government Act. I am afraid that if the member has already formed his opinion and he is rock solid on a whole range of things, and if people like the member for Roe do not recognise that there needs to be modernisation of the legislation that oversees our local government sector, we will be in the same position in 20 years' time.

COVID has shown how quickly local governments and governments in general can move when they have to, and I applaud local governments' responses and what they have done.

I think it is important, member for Riverton, to go through the issues around conflicts of interest and improper use of council property, because it goes to the root of the issues around process. I highlight the following. The Local Government Act is quite specific in its requirements for councillors to disclose financial proximity and impartiality interests. There are guidelines that inform that for elected members, for example, on the department's website. The Local Government (Rules of Conduct) Regulations 2007 set out uniform rules to guide the behaviour of council members. Regulation 8 prescribes how and when the disclosure of an impartiality interest must be made by a council member. The Local Government Act provides for conflict of interest exemptions that may apply in the case of a financial interest that relates to bodies with non-profit-making objectives. I want to highlight that currently, the legislation does not require a person disclosing a non-financial interest to leave the meeting. They may remain and participate in the voting and discussion on the matter. That is the existing experience. If the member for Riverton's claim is that that has been contravened, I would urge him to make a formal report. In the case of a financial interest, the disclosing person is required to leave the room and not participate in the matter unless approval is given for participation by the council or the minister. This sometimes occurs, rarely, from memory when a minister, for example, has given approval for the sake of a quorum. If everybody was declaring and vacating, some decisions would not be made, so there are exemptions.

There is a prescribed legal process for submission and consideration of breach complaints regarding alleged conflicts of interest. A process is in place if there is an alleged breach. This is important: the existence of an interest affecting impartiality depends upon the council member or employee having association with a person or organisation that has a matter being discussed at a council or committee meeting; the employee being required to give advice on a matter when they have an association with a person or an organisation related to that matter; the type of matter being discussed at a council or committee meeting; or an employee considering a matter under delegated authority in which they have an association with a person or an organisation related to that matter.

I highlight a case that was before the Supreme Court in 2019 known as the Dain case. Following the recent decision of the WA Supreme Court, Local Government Professionals Australia—LG Pro—in partnership with a prominent legal firm, circulated an article on impartiality. The article suggested that voting on a matter by a councillor who has declared an impartiality interest may result in a relevant council resolution being invalidated by a court. To clarify, the reference is *Dain Pty Ltd v Shire of Peppermint Grove* [2019] WASC 264. The case in question does not suggest that councillors should or can refrain from participating in voting on matters in which they have declared

an impartiality interest. This is nothing new. Councillors will often be faced with matters in which their opinions are publicly known. I do not think anyone could claim that they were not aware of the opinion and stances of, for example, the now Mayor of Melville and a number of the councillors who stood for election regarding the wave park going on the land that was proposed. I do not think anyone could claim they were not aware of that, but, as this Dain case found, it is still essential that councillors openly and transparently ensure they make their decisions objectively on the merits of the matter and that they can demonstrate that they did. The article as a reference point is an important consideration around this issue of impartiality and direct interest; it tells us that we can have these interests and declare them, but does not suggest that councillors should or can refrain from participating or voting on those matters. The member is arguing that they should essentially have vacated or not participated in that.

Dr M.D. Nahan: I think the mayor has a financial interest that was not declared.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: If the member has made that allegation, he is welcome to formally put that in.

Dr M.D. Nahan: The Dain case says that if they declare their impartiality, they can stay in the room if they make the decision objectively. The Dain case was about that impartiality—they could stay in the room, but they had to act in an impartial manner in their decision. That was the substance of the Dain case. My accusation is that wasn't done by some of the councillors this time.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: If the member genuinely believes that, he can give further evidence on the processes to the department or another field. Again, I am surprised that if that is what the member is alleging, we have not had a build-up of those.

Dr M.D. Nahan: The decision is not final. There will be many complaints once this is done.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: During debate this evening, the member has reported some milestones that have already taken place in the lead-up to those decisions.

Dr M.D. Nahan: There was a submission to alter the decision of some 200. I imagine many of those—I am not organising this—will turn around and make a complaint once the decision is final.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: As is their right.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Once the decision is made, it is hard to alter. The issue is also the magnitude of the asset involved.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Essentially, I do not think anyone doubts the strategic value of that asset. Of course, councils deal with strategic assets regularly in their general business in a whole range of matters over a course.

There is an agreement that we will adjourn this debate shortly, but I finish by saying that we are now in the process of working towards a new Local Government Act for Western Australia. The process has involved high levels of consultation essentially through two phases. There was a lot of consultation with a whole range of stakeholders, and one of the things that we missed in our review of the Local Government Act and the processes associated with that is that we did not just go to the likely target groups such as the Western Australian Local Government Association and LG Pro. They were part of the consultation, but they were not the be-all and end-all, and that is why the first two phases were focused on gathering input from a whole range of stakeholders including chambers of commerce and industry and people who are involved in businesses who recognise the critical role that local governments play in the welfare and wellbeing of business development in their communities. That is why we had some sectional interests, such as the WA Rangers Association, which deals with a whole range of matters under its jurisdiction, and representatives of the Electoral Commission involved in those early processes.

Then, of course, to consolidate all the consultative information, data, feedback and submissions, I asked my very good friend and a very experienced former councillor, the member for Balcatta, to chair an expert panel that would essentially distil the data, information, comments and anecdotal and formal submissions into some guiding principles that we would be able to consider in the development of a green paper. As I said to the Western Australian Local Government Association state council last Wednesday, the intention is that a re-elected McGowan government will deliver to the sector and other important interests and stakeholders a green paper in a new term. That will form the foundations of a new Local Government Act. I congratulate and thank the member for Balcatta, who has put up some very interesting proposals. The government is now considering those policy matters. Some will attract a lot of interest and will be of heightened interest to some in the sector.

We are about reforming. We did not sit on our hands for eight and a half years and only try to draw lines on a map and say, "We're going to fix local government by redrawing the boundaries." We did not do that. We consulted, signed a partnership agreement and said that we wanted to work with the sector. We will not always agree, and we do not. There are lots of things that WALGA does not agree with me on, nor Local Government Professionals Australia WA, but we are determined to reform the Local Government Act. We are determined to ensure that local government, as a legitimate level of government, delivers quality services to the people it represents; is modernised and delivers to a modern economy and has modern aspirations for communities; is agile and flexible and can respond when challenges are thrown at it, such as COVID; and understands the integral and important role that local governments play in delivering a strategic plan for how their communities will operate, look and function in the future.

That is good policy. That is important policy. We are committed to it. We are going to do it. I ask the member for Roe in particular, because he is a reasonable man, that when regulation 9 and our puppy farming reforms, which I know he does not like, come forward, he will genuinely talk to us. The intention is not to incite him. The intention is not to upset him. I do not want to do that; I want to work with him, but we have to get these reforms in place. Work with us. Do not obstruct us when the legislation goes to the other place. That is not good government in my view. Let us get reform.

I thank the member for Riverton. I expect to hear that some complaints have been lodged with the department, but I hope I have clarified the existing situation with the roles and responsibilities of local governments in the context of Melville council and others in Western Australia.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr D.R. Michael**.

CORONAVIRUS — G2G PASS APPROVAL PROCESS

Motion

MR P.A. KATSAMBANIS (Hillarys) [5.04 pm]: I move —

That this house notes that the lack of transparency and consistency of the G2G PASS approval process has caused significant stress, anxiety and distress to Western Australians who are trying to legally return home, and calls on the government to create a clearer, simpler and more consistent process to allow local residents to return to Western Australia whilst continuing to protect our state from COVID-19.

I want to make a few comments at the outset to make sure there is absolutely no misapprehension in anyone's mind about what we, as the opposition party in Western Australia, are trying to achieve by this. We all pay our respects and give our thanks and gratitude to the police officers who are working over and above the call of duty to protect our state in this difficult time. We have been through the arguments about the numbers of police and the like, but we know that on top of their already onerous duties, as soon as COVID struck, our police officers were asked to take on additional duties. They have done so without complaint and have tried to do their absolute best job, and they are continuing to do that despite the stress it places upon them both professionally and personally. We all thank them. It is not an us-and-them situation. Every Western Australian is grateful for the job our police are doing, especially in removing themselves from their usual ordinary duties and undertaking the task of dealing with the COVID pandemic—the 400 or so people who have been commissioned to a special COVID unit and all those other police officers who have added occasional checks on self-isolators to their ordinary everyday duties. We thank them for the work they are doing and we appreciate the effort they are putting in, and hopefully they will get some respite soon.

The other thing that is clear is that we accept that at a time when there is a border closure, there must be a process to allow people into and out of our state for an understandable purpose and reason. Those debates have been had in other places. There is no debate in this place about that. We are not arguing in any way to remove that. However, what we are saying is what we are hearing from members of the public of Western Australia who have had to go through the process of applying for approval to return to Western Australia. We are talking primarily about residents of Western Australia—people who have their home and family here and who see themselves as and understand themselves to be Western Australians. At a time of crisis and difficulty, it is understandable that people want to return home. They want the comfort of home and their loved ones. They also want, of course, if they are concerned about other parts of the world, the comfort of knowing that a place like Western Australia has not had community spread of COVID for a serious amount of time and is seen as one of the safest places to be. So why would Western Australians not want to come here?

In order to come here, they need to apply for approval and the government has set up a system that is colloquially known as a G2G PASS—Good to Go PASS. People apply through a portal; it is really an online application process. They provide their information and they are told yes or no. We are seeing a number of anomalies arising in this process the longer it continues. Western Australians are coming to members of Parliament—I know they are coming to members on both sides of the house and to the Nationals WA—usually to their local member of Parliament, and saying, “This process is not working.” The process is confusing and difficult. It is inconsistent and is producing anomalous results. Some people are given some advice and others are given different advice. Some people in very similar factual circumstances are allowed to do certain things and others are not.

We know from experience that no matter what process is set up, once it becomes convoluted, and once people see inconsistencies in it and feel that it is too cumbersome or too difficult to navigate, they start losing faith and trust in the process. We have also seen those rare individuals—thankfully, they are rare—who thumb their nose at any process. We have seen it with the young woman who smuggled herself into Western Australia in the back of a truck. We have seen it with the two women who went back to South Australia after coming here to visit a rapper. We have also seen it with several others who have found novel and unique ways to try to circumvent the hotel quarantine process. No-one is standing up for those people. In actual fact, we want to free up the process so that our authorities—our police and all the people involved—can focus on the rule breakers. What we do not want to do is unfairly inconvenience law-abiding citizens. We want to help our law-abiding citizens; we want to help our law-abiding Western Australian residents return home. What we are hearing about on a daily basis in our electorate

offices is a process that may have been well-intentioned, but it may also have been put together in a rush and it is inconveniencing people. In many cases, it is causing significant distress to people, and, beyond inconvenience, this process, unfortunately, is harming families. It is harming them in many ways. It is separating them from loved ones and causing anguish and mental health issues, and, in some cases, it is stopping people from obtaining the care or treatment that they need, whether it is medical care and treatment or simply the assistance of loved ones that can be provided here in Western Australia. They are being denied that opportunity.

What we are asking the government to do is not difficult. We are asking the government for a clear process without inconsistencies, a simple process that assists people to get through the first time so that they do not have to make multiple applications at the same time as they are juggling flights, which, as we know, are extremely rare. People book a flight and they apply in good faith for a pass to come in—if they do not have a booking for a flight, there is no point in applying for the pass—but they do not get information about whether their application has been approved until the time for them to confirm or rebook their flight expires, so they are trapped. They book a flight for a Friday and apply for the pass and they continue to wait and wait. If they do not cancel or move their flight by the Thursday, they lose the flight. In some cases, people pay a lot of money for their flight because they are as rare as hen's teeth; indeed, some people have to pay for a business class seat when they do not want to do so because it is the only seat available. They wait on Thursday afternoon and they do not hear from the G2G people about whether they have a pass. As the clock is clicking, they have no option but to cancel their flight and rebook another one for the following week and they have to start the process of getting approval based on a new flight. They are trapped in a vicious cycle because the process is convoluted and difficult. These same people hear about others who, in very similar circumstances, get to come here with no exception.

During the last set of sittings in August, before Parliament rose, we were told that about 7 000 people had obtained exemptions from quarantine and self-isolation, yet ordinary Western Australians are saying, "Why is it that some people can get exemptions and we can't?" We have seen high-profile businesspeople apparently moving in and out of the state with ease. I am not criticising that, but what gives them the ability or opportunity to get that exemption when other people cannot? We have seen high-profile models and musicians come to Western Australia, some to return home, and others to attend funerals, without the need to quarantine and self-isolate. Apparently, they have done this under strict conditions, and that is understandable. We understand that when someone comes here with an exemption from quarantine and self-isolation to perhaps attend a funeral, they are placed under strict conditions. They spend an hour or two at the funeral and then go back to their hotel where they stay before they get on a flight to return home. We understand that. But why cannot other people, such as Western Australian residents, have that same right? Why do some people have that right but not others? That is the lack of transparency and the risk is—apart from the terrible outcomes for the individuals involved, which is bad in itself; and we should acknowledge that this is a terrible outcome for people who are struggling with anguish and grief—that when people see these inconsistencies, they lose faith in the process. They say, "This process isn't working for us" and they look for workarounds, which, in itself, causes a much bigger risk to the public health of all Western Australians. We do not want to see that happen. We want people to follow the law but the more complex and difficult the government makes it, and the less transparent it is, the harder it is for people to comply. That is what we are getting on a daily basis in our electorate offices. I hear these stories in my office on a daily basis and the members I have spoken to from both sides of the house also seem to hear them on a daily basis. The longer our borders stay shut and the longer there are significant restrictions on people entering and leaving Western Australia, the more people are going to look to make these applications and the more they are going to have understandable human needs to travel to look after family in other places and attend significant family events, particularly ones they cannot avoid such as, unfortunately, funerals or to visit dying parents, siblings or other relatives. These people need to know that the process will look after them; that it will not unusually and unnecessarily inconvenience them. Yes, there will be strict rules, but those rules will be clear and transparent; and, if they do not apply to everyone, there will be clear guidelines as to why they apply to some and not others so that everyone understand the rules.

Let us look at some of the inconvenience that, unfortunately, I have experienced through my office—I am sure other members have many examples—just to put a human face to this issue. A young family from Padbury, which is in the northern suburbs of Perth, left Western Australia in early July. The mother and the children left first and the husband left a few days later. They flew into Melbourne and immediately hired a car and drove to Mooroopna, which is a very small town in the Goulburn Valley in the northern part of Victoria, to attend the grandmother's funeral—that is, the mother of the lady. It is understandable that if someone's mother dies, they would want to attend the funeral. Tight-knit families will want to come together for a funeral, especially at this time of COVID, when people are already feeling that need to cocoon and be close to their family, and so they did that. The family then applied to return back home. They did not have a house over there; they had driven over for the funeral, gone back to the hotel, and tried to come back home. They could not get an answer. They made application upon application and had no response. The family could not get an answer. They contacted my electorate office in an absolute blind panic. They were living in a small motel room, waiting to get the go-ahead. They were obviously worried because they were living in an area where COVID was rife, so they did not want to go out. They were essentially trapped in their room, waiting for an answer that did not come. They had to book flights and cancel them; book flights and cancel them. Eventually, this family of five—husband, wife and three daughters aged nine, seven and four—were

given the go-ahead, after a lot of running around and a lot of rebooked flights, and were forced to quarantine in a hotel room in the centre of Perth for two weeks. This is a family of five, including three young, active daughters, who had a house in Padbury that was empty. They could have gone there and self-isolated. We know there are other people in very similar circumstances who have been allowed to self-isolate.

Another example is a young couple—again, constituents of mine from the suburb of Padbury—who flew to Sydney and then travelled to Albury. They flew to Sydney specifically to avoid flying through Melbourne, which was a COVID hotspot. Anyone who understands the geography of Australia will know that although Albury is in New South Wales, it is only about two hours' drive from Melbourne airport. It is about six or seven hours' drive from Sydney airport. The couple flew into Sydney and drove to Albury to visit their ailing parents. That is what families do—they visit their ailing parents. They stayed on a farm that was 15 minutes from Albury on the Victorian side of the border. At that time, passage between Victoria and New South Wales was humdrum. I think it is again now, as long as someone does not come from Melbourne, and anyone who has been in a rural situation or these border communities will understand that. They stayed at the farm. They had not been anywhere near Melbourne or the hotspots. They kept getting refused entry back into WA, even though there had been no outbreak in New South Wales at the time.

This couple eventually managed to get their passes, which enabled them to self-isolate and quarantine at their home in Padbury. They booked separate flights because, as we know, seats are very, very limited, so when one seat became available, the husband said to the wife, "You take that seat and I'll come the next day." The woman arrived in Perth. She was good to go—tick!—and went home to self-isolate in Padbury. The next day, the husband arrived on a flight. Did he get the tick to go home to self-isolate with his partner? No; he was sent into hotel quarantine for a fortnight. How does that make any sense at all? It does not. That is the risk that I keep highlighting. Remember, what we are saying here is that this is unusual and unfair inconvenience to people, and it runs the risk of destroying faith and trust in a process that has been set up for the right reasons.

There are many other examples. A lovely lady from Hillarys went to Melbourne to assist her daughter, because her daughter had had problems with her first pregnancy, was pregnant again and about to give birth, and the lady's two-year-old grandchild needed care. The daughter, I think, lives somewhere in Victoria, just outside Melbourne. The daughter did not have much support over there; she is a Western Australian girl living in Melbourne, and she wanted and needed the assistance of her mother to look after her two-year-old while she was giving birth to her second child. The lady was refused entry to return to Western Australia three times, despite needing to return here for significant treatment. I will not mention what that treatment was; I like to respect people's privacy. The first time the lady was refused entry was because she did not provide enough evidence that she lived in Western Australia. She had provided her driver's licence with her address stating that she lived in Hillarys. She was told that was not enough evidence that she lives in Western Australia. She applied again, and provided her rates and car insurance notice, a letter from her employer and lots of other documents to prove that she lives here in Western Australia, thinking that was all well and good. The refusal came back, and this is the sort of silly bureaucracy that drives people absolutely and justifiably mad. She was rejected because she had not provided primary proof such as a driver's licence. She had already provided the driver's licence in the first application and rightfully thought that someone would have noticed that it was already on her file, but she got a refusal on the basis that she did not provide her driver's licence, even though it was sitting on some file somewhere. It had already been provided. Clearly, if this is happening, there is a breakdown in the process. This occurred only in the last few weeks, so it is not teething problems.

The lady applied again, and she was refused because she could not prove that she would suffer from significant personal hardship if she was not allowed to return home. This lady, who is undergoing significant treatment, as is her husband, could not prove that she had significant personal hardship, yet we see other people coming in and out of the state almost at will—business people, celebrities and the like. Eventually, she got her approval, but, of course, as is happening with other people, she kept booking and rebooking flights, and the earliest flight she could book is 14 September. Obviously, her family are awaiting her arrival.

There are many other examples. Another lady in my electorate is the mother of a newborn and is suffering from really severe postnatal depression. Her psychiatrist in Melbourne suggested that she return home to Western Australia for support. As we know, there are a lot of young Western Australians living in the eastern states; we know that. This lady was living in the eastern states, but she is a Western Australian, and her psychiatrist said, "You're suffering severe postnatal depression; the best place for you is to be supported by your family over in the west." She applied for a pass. Understandably, she wanted to quarantine at home, because she was coming home for the support that her psychiatrist said she needed. Her parents are both medical professionals, and they provided a documented plan for quarantine in their very large home, indicating that this lady would essentially be living separately, with a separate kitchen, separate bathroom and separate living area—completely separate arrangements. Her parents are both professionals in the medical field. Unfortunately, she was told that she could not do that. Through the intervention of my office, at least this lady was provided contact information for an on-duty triage nurse and links to Think Mental Health WA, Beyond Blue, and the King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women, so that she could do her quarantine in hotel isolation.

Another lady who was suffering from postnatal depression arrived in Western Australia and was in hotel quarantine, but she was not coping with it because of her postnatal depression. Her mother contacted our office for help. She was distraught that her daughter, while suffering postnatal depression, was sitting in a hotel room in quarantine. The mother told us that her daughter had not been provided with any information about medical help when arriving in Western Australia and that no medical assistance was provided when she asked for it at the hotel. I will not name the hotel at this stage, although I am happy to tell the minister offline if she is interested. My office intervened. I have to say that the offices of the Minister for Police and the Minister for Health quickly got onto it after we alerted them to it, but it should not have to get to that. Obviously, the daughter has now spoken to a doctor and people are following up her case. We are also following it up through my office.

I have dozens of examples that I do not have sufficient time to get to today because I want to give other members the opportunity to highlight the issues that they have come across. However, I will highlight one last anomaly that I came across very recently to show what is happening in Western Australia and convey why people are concerned. I saw a message on Twitter from a lady named Chloe-Amanda Baily, who is a television presenter for Channel Seven in the eastern states. The Twitter message reads —

So my mate gets a call to fly home to Perth from Melbourne because his mum's become really sick. He flies in and has to quarantine for two weeks but things go downhill for his mum. He applies to get out four times and is rejected. She died a couple days before he is free.

Chloe-Amanda Baily follows on and says —

Now he has to live with that the rest of his life. SURELY there has to be SOME leniency for cases like this. He will never get over this. My heart bleeds for him.

In that case, the man was quarantining while visiting Western Australia to see his ailing mother when his mother took a turn for the worse. The man applied four times, I think it said on Twitter, to get out of quarantine but he was not permitted to get out. If that approach were consistent and that was the rule that applied to everyone, we would say that it was unfortunate, but that we are living in difficult times. However, someone told me today—I am pretty sure it was the member for Nedlands, but I do not want to put words in his mouth—that he came across a constituent who was in a similar circumstance but who was allowed two very short five or 10-minute visits with their ailing relative, even though they were in hotel quarantine. So we have one Western Australian in hotel quarantine who was not allowed to visit his dying mother and his mother passed away before the quarantine period ended and another Western Australian in almost identical circumstances who was allowed two short visits. Again, that highlights the complete and utter inconsistency of the application of whatever rules apply. They are significant inconsistencies and heartbreaking stories.

If we took an overriding view of the situation, we would say that all these rules are in place to protect Western Australians from COVID. If we became extremely flowery like the Premier sometimes does in question time, we would, essentially, warn about death and destruction. Today the Premier again talked about killing people. That is a little extreme, but there is a significant risk, particularly to certain cohorts. I do not want to single out the Minister for Sport and Recreation, because I am also in one of the susceptible categories, given my heart condition and lung issues.

Mr M.P. Murray: I had mine tested in the last couple of weeks and they said I've got another couple of hundred years at least!

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: They tested mine and surprisingly told me that I had a heart, which is probably news to some of you!

We can allow a little bit of levity, but at the heart of it we know that this disease can cause significant harm and death. We understand that. As an overarching understanding, we all know that we have to have strong border protections. Some people like to call them hard borders or whatever you want to call them—go crazy in your nomenclature. They certainly are not hard borders because people are getting in and out all the time. Some travel with a G2G PASS, some have exemptions and some use whatever method it takes. We have seen high-profile cases of individuals coming into and out of our state and returning again in some cases and in other cases just coming in and going out on only one occasion with, apparently, very little difficulty. We have seen flight crews, including flight crews from Melbourne, come here and not be restricted to their hotel, although their movements have been curtailed. They are not able to go too far, but they can go to a restaurant for a meal or a bar for a drink and they can go to the supermarket to shop. Flight crews from Melbourne can do that and truck drivers can do that. Truck drivers can come here. I think they are asked to wear a mask when they are out in public. I do not know whether it is a requirement for some or all of them or even whether it is a requirement placed upon them by their employer or by the state, because a lot of these rules are opaque. We are not told what they are. We know that truck drivers can cross the border and come here. They might have come from Melbourne—there are massive distribution centres there—or they might have come from Sydney. In the early days of the second wave that broke out in Victoria and reached Sydney, some of them might have been at the Crossroads Hotel in New South Wales. They could come here, go to their hotel and then go out for a meal or a drink or go to a supermarket to buy provisions, although, obviously, there were some restrictions on them. They might have had a territorial restriction, but we do not know

because we are not told about that. The public sees that happening and they also see these genuine cases of hardship. They see the families who have been inconvenienced. They see people having to apply again and again every single time, and having to book and rebook their flights every single time, while not knowing whether they will get permission to come to Western Australia. These people are not seeking to come to our state because they want to move here or they want a holiday or to have fun; these are Western Australians who have been out of the state for legitimate reasons and want to come back home. They are prepared to quarantine and self-isolate and they are prepared to undertake COVID testing or any other type of health test. What they do not want to do is go through an elongated process and experience a long period of uncertainty about whether and when they will be allowed to return.

I know and appreciate that the process that has been set up is resource intensive. I recognise that the minister will say to us that we as an opposition are asking for more resources. I think that the record number of applications that we have seen in our office is six or seven applications. I put it to the minister that looking at an application once rather than three, four, five, six or seven times and ironing out the minor issues would be less resource intensive. Emailing an applicant and asking them to send a rate notice as well as a driver's licence to confirm that they live in Western Australia is preferable to saying sorry, rejected, try again. That would free up the offices that are doing this work to process more applications in a timely manner. Currently, it appears to outsiders, particularly the people applying for the permits, that an opaque, Byzantine system is being applied in a manner that a Byzantine bureaucracy entails. As a result, what are we getting? We are getting families who are separated and people who require treatment and care and who are struggling to return to Western Australia to receive that care. The general public is recognising that different sets of rules apply to different people in extremely similar circumstances. If this continues, we will see more of a breakdown in respect and trust for that system. We are moving this motion in good faith. We are not condemning the government; we are not yelling at the government; we are not even saying that the government has got this wrong. We are saying that there needs to be an approvals process if we have a border that is policed. We are told that this will probably continue well past Christmas, because the government has said that it is not participating in the national commonwealth government scheme to open up by Christmas, so the inference is that this will probably apply beyond Christmas. In that Christmas period I think there will be more applications rather than fewer. More families will want to be reunited, for understandable reasons, including that people who might be working on a contractual basis in other places interstate, or overseas for that matter, might have their contract expire towards the end of the year and might want to return to their home—to where they usually live and work, and that is Western Australia. We need to get this right. This will be around for a while. We need to make it easy; we need to make it open; we need to make it transparent and, in many ways, we need to make it more user-friendly. If there is a small technical glitch in the application, do not go with that hard-hatted rejection; have an interaction with the people; send a quick email or even a text message if the systems are available in the unit processing these applications. Interact with people and help them get through this process. This is a difficult time. This is an emotional time. People are struggling. Families are disconnected and are being separated for what appears to be inconsistent and sometimes ridiculous reasons.

We thank the police officers and other staff who are doing this work; it is important work keeping us all safe. We are asking the government to ensure that there is a process in place that is open, transparent and simple—a process that is user-friendly and that is calibrated to help people get back home, not one that shuts the border on them, not one that shuts them out from their home in Western Australia. If the government can do this, I think we will go a long way towards having this system well respected, well regarded and adhered to by people. If the government does not achieve this, the longer we go, the more this is going to fray—the more dislocation and uncertainty there will be, the more distress will be caused to Western Australian families and, unfortunately, the more this will empower some people to try to get around the system. That is the last thing we want or need in Western Australia.

MR K.M. O'DONNELL (Kalgoorlie) [5.43 pm]: Mr Acting Speaker —

Mr W.J. Johnston: Are you going to be nice to us?

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Yes, always. Then I will get spoken to later and told not to be!

Greetings, Mr Acting Speaker. I thank you for allowing me to speak. I am speaking on the motion that this house notes a lack of transparency and consistency in the G2G PASS approval process and so on. I firstly would like to say to the Minister for Police that her police department is doing an outstanding job. It is. I do not think anybody would say any different.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: Best force in Australia!

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Yes. I miss it!

Mr W.J. Johnston: You might be back there soon!

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: I know! I have mentioned that we bring back the police reserve.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: I have said he is very welcome back any time!

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Yes!

Mrs M.H. Roberts: If you came back at your substantive level, I do not think that would be a problem!

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: The police department has had to do something it has never done before. The government has had to do something it has never done before.

One of the hard borders is at Eucla, in my electorate of Kalgoorlie. I have tried to fly out there a few times now, and each time we have had to cancel, because if there is any amount of water on the airstrip, we cannot land. On Wednesday, I drove from Perth to Kalgoorlie. On Friday, I drove to Eucla. It took just over nine hours. It is a very long trip. I got to see it, and then the following day I drove back for nine hours. The quarantine staff and the police out there are doing a fantastic job. It is the first time I have ever worn a mask, and I am so glad we do not have to wear them.

Before the G2G came into being, residents in my electorate had to drive to The Lakes with travel documents to verify what they were doing—this is when we had the regional boundaries—and then had to find out whether they were allowed to continue on. In some instances, they would drive up to 500 kilometres, and even up to 1 000 kilometres, and still not know whether they could get through. When the G2G came into being, people started to apply online. This is not a witch-hunt in any way, shape or form on the G2G, the police department or the government. When people apply through the G2G, an issue is that they are getting rejected and are given a reason; for example, they have not verified where they live. Then the person responds by verifying in the second application. Then they get a message saying that they need medical proof of why they need to travel. They keep going back and forth and that causes grief, anxiety and other issues.

The Premier has been on record several times saying that he wants a reduction in the number of fly in, fly out workers from the eastern states, but workers and their families who are uprooting their lives to move here are being knocked back for various reasons.

I will highlight the predicaments of stranded travellers, but I would like to say to the Minister for Police that my aunt suffered a heart attack recently. I managed to see her before she passed away. Her daughter, Justine, was living in Dubai. She raced home. She had to go into two weeks' quarantine. While she was in quarantine, she was given permission to visit her mother. That was outstanding. I even offered to play the call-in-a-favour card, but I did not have to.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: I did not know you had that card!

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: The jury will disregard that last comment!

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: You are not the judge here. You are not able to direct the jury!

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: No!

That was a situation in which commonsense prevailed and the police department allowed her to see her mother for half an hour, and her mother died a couple of hours later. That was very good.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: I am pleased they had that opportunity.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Yes, correct.

Just because I mentioned that call-in-a-favour card, in every instance during the COVID-19 pandemic, I have not once asked my friends in high positions to do anything on behalf of my family, friends or anybody. It has been professional. The police have been very professional, too. Again, I want to praise the police for how outstanding they have been.

Just while I remember, minister, a few months ago we asked whether there was any chance we could visit the COVID-19 centre to have a look at it, not to criticise anything, but I have not heard a response. I might try to send another request asking whether we can do that.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: It is always subject to operational requirements.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Yes, but if there was a time when we could do that, perhaps when we are here in Parliament, it would be appreciated.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: I will find out, yes.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: I thank the minister.

In the few minutes I have left, I would like to highlight a couple of people. Again, this is not to criticise. This is a bit of a debriefing that we can use to improve things and make them better. We never know; this might never happen again, but, if it were to happen again in the future, we could learn from this and be prepared.

Colleen and her husband moved to Victoria for work. They took their son Adam with them and left their other sons here. They kept their family home in Western Australia. After they had been in Victoria for a short time, the father passed away. His body was returned to Western Australia for the funeral, because that is where all their family members lived. However, the G2G applications of the mum and her son were rejected. They reapplied a couple of times, and they were again rejected. They approached my office, and we assisted them to get a G2G PASS.

Keenan wanted to move to Kalgoorlie–Boulder permanently from Victoria. He had managed to get a mining services job in Kalgoorlie and had resigned from his job in Victoria and not renewed his accommodation lease. His G2G application was rejected twice. He was jobless and homeless, and under mental stress. He contacted our office, and he got his G2G PASS.

Ariel is a heavy duty diesel mechanic from Sydney who had been offered employment in Kalgoorlie as a specialist in the mining industry. Heavy duty diesel mechanics are very hard to find. They are not a dime a dozen. They are a diamond. They are as rare as hen's teeth. He applied for a G2G PASS five times. Each time he applied, he was told that he had not done this or that, and his employer rectified it, but each time a new reason for rejection came out. They approached my office, and we were able to assist him to get his G2G PASS. He is now in Western Australia and hoping that his family will be able to relocate to Kalgoorlie–Boulder.

Geoff and Julie Bernhardt have lived in Kalgoorlie for more than 30 years. They had retired and were holidaying in northern Queensland when the border was closed, and they could not get back into Western Australia. When they applied for a G2G PASS, they kept getting knocked back. This was an issue of commonsense. Despite the fact that they had lived practically all their lives in Kalgoorlie–Boulder, they were not allowed back into Western Australia.

Jason had been working in Kalgoorlie as a fly in, fly out worker. He went back to Victoria to pack his belongings so that he could live in Western Australia permanently, based on the Premier's advice that he should relocate rather than be a FIFO, and he was granted a G2G PASS. However, while he was in Victoria, everything changed, and his pass was cancelled. He made two more applications to get back into WA, and they were rejected. We were able to help him to get back to Western Australia.

Emma was in Brisbane because her brother had brain cancer, and she had been helping her brother and his wife to look after their children for a few weeks to give them respite while he underwent medical treatment. On 6 July, she had applied for a G2G PASS to go to Brisbane and come back to Western Australia. She had waited until 10 July, and she had not heard a thing, so four days later she left for Brisbane. On 16 July, six days later, when she was in Brisbane, she was told that her application to come back to Western Australia had been refused. She had helped out her brother, and she had children back in Western Australia, but her application was knocked back. We were able to help her get back to Western Australia.

The McPhee family, Mandy and Luke, were living in Victoria, and dad got a job in Kalgoorlie. He had been driving through South Australia to pick up his wife and kids in Victoria and return with them to Kalgoorlie–Boulder when the border was closed. He had to make a decision there and then to return to Western Australia, because he was worried that if he kept going to Victoria, he might not get back. He went back to Kalgoorlie, and his wife was stuck in Victoria with two kids and had to live in a caravan for numerous weeks. That was very harrowing and caused a lot of anxiety for his wife and kids. They tried to get their G2G PASS but were rejected. We managed to assist them to fill in the forms correctly, and their passes were approved.

Shane and Elizabeth had their applications rejected five times. They are Western Australians. They had gone to Tasmania on a bit of a working holiday. When everything went pear-shaped, they went to Victoria so that they could try to get back to Western Australia. However, the border was shut. They had nowhere to stay and risked being homeless. They were also in financial hardship because they had no means of support. They were struggling. They got to South Australia, and the South Australian police said that they could go to the border. They then had to sleep in their car for days on end waiting for their G2G PASS, which kept getting rejected. We were able to assist them.

I reiterate that this is not a witch-hunt. I am not headhunting. The police are doing a fantastic job. This has never been seen or done before. The police are trying to do what they can. Problems will occur with the tens of thousands of applications that are coming in. There are no complaints whatsoever from me or my party about the job that the police are doing.

MR D.T. REDMAN (Warren–Blackwood) [5.55 pm]: I also want to make some remarks on the motion that has been moved by the member for Hillarys. I reiterate the point made by the member for Hillarys about the spirit in which this motion has been moved. The purpose of this motion is to highlight some of the challenges. In no way is it questioning the scale of the task and, indeed, the objectives that the government is trying to achieve in putting in place appropriate barriers to ensure that we protect the people of Western Australia from this very challenging pandemic.

Some time ago, I called for a hotline for members of Parliament. I think I even asked a question of the Premier about this matter. I still believe that should be the case. Members of Parliament should have access to a direct path—a hotline, if we like—through which we can raise the issues that are raised with our office and put on the table things that our constituents are not able to put on the table and take up the sometimes very compassionate cases that are put to us.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: The federal government does very well with hotlines on matters such as migration and social security.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: When the lockdown was on with the intrastate barriers, there was a hotline for members of Parliament. That was a really good platform through which to raise issues and get a quick response. We also need a hotline for this issue, because it is being increasingly raised by constituents who come into our office. If I can go

back one step, in the absence of a hotline, my office has effectively taken up this issue with the office of the Minister for Police. I highlight that the response that we get from the minister's office is outstanding. We get a good response from the minister's office, and things are turned around quite quickly. However, a hotline would be appropriate, given the issues that have been raised by my colleagues and the many challenges that are coming through our door. I am sure the last thing the Minister for Police wants to deal with is these very challenging circumstances that are quite unique in their own right.

The strategy is to have a clear process that can be articulated to those who need to use it. I have looked at the online application process, and it is not terribly easy to understand. I know that will change from time to time as the rules and the thresholds change because of the issues that present, but it is important to have a clear process and to articulate that process. I repeat that a hotline for members of Parliament would add to that and help the government to process the many issues that come through our door. However, we cannot help but have some ministerial intervention. We cannot get a process that is well defined and in which the people in the police department and the health department make decisions based on a set of criteria, and we get the consistency that comes from that. We simply cannot achieve that. There will be examples and circumstances that fall outside the guidelines as they are defined. Therefore, we cannot avoid having some sort of ministerial intervention—the minister or the Premier looking over this process and saying, “I think the decisions that have been made here are wrong. We need to intervene and change it.” I think the example of the nurses is a good example of that. Western Australian nurses went to Victoria to help with the COVID challenge there. Evidently, as we heard through the media—I have no way of affirming whether this was the case—they were told that if they happened to contract COVID, they could return to Western Australia. The first response they got was, “No, you can't.” Then, obviously, there was some sort of intervention and that was changed, and probably appropriately so. It was the wrong decision and clearly there was some sort of intervention from the Premier. I do not think we can avoid having ministerial intervention in these sorts of issues, because they are many and varied. In a lot of cases, people are in very, very unique circumstances and the rules simply do not apply, and there needs to be some sort of intervention to make a decision.

However, the most important point, as we work through this issue, as highlighted by the member for Hillarys—I made comments on this during the member for Dawesville's motion in private members' business a little while ago—is getting Western Australians back home. These are our people—Western Australians—and this is their home. Getting them home is and should be a priority. The government should be putting its resources into getting our people home. That should not be questioned. They are our priority. In many cases, people are away from Western Australia for a whole heap of reasons that are outside their control. The Premier made a comment in the media a couple of times—I have heard it twice at least—that I do not think is the right comment to make; it was about people having had six months to get home. That does not cut it. People are away from Western Australia for a range of reasons, including personal, work, the rules changing, stress and the circumstances in which they find themselves. They want to get home now and it should be a priority for the government to work through that.

Whether it is sick family, friends, work-related matters or bereavement, people want to get home to Western Australia, and that should be a priority.

I asked the Premier whether there is a cap on the number of Western Australians allowed back into Western Australia. I struggle to see why there cannot be a cap when we look at the number of people, expats, who have applied to come back into Australia. At one stage, I heard that it might be something like 14 000 people a day. That is quite a substantial number of people and it is not hard to realise that a substantial number of those people want to get back to Western Australia, so I understand why there probably should be a cap. There is certainly a cap on the number of people coming back to our state from overseas. I understand that we have a share of 500 of the 4 000 or so that the nation takes in, but we have limited hotel quarantine accommodation and we have the challenge of health resourcing to meet the needs of those choosing to come in—whether that is testing facilities or processing or whatever—so there has to be some sort of cap on that. The Premier said that there was no cap, yet the application process for those seeking to get into Western Australia is fairly challenging. It requires them to get a G2G PASS and work out whether they have to go into quarantine. If they have to go into quarantine, does it have to be in a hotel or can they do it at home? There are inconsistencies, as highlighted by some of my colleagues and certainly in the examples that I have seen. It would suggest that perhaps—maybe it is a long call to make or maybe it is a conspiracy theory—that government is trying to slow this down. It has the foot on the hose to stop people coming back into WA because it is managing people as they come in our door. I would think resourcing our people to get back into Western Australia should be a government priority and it should take the necessary steps to ensure that they get through the process efficiently in order to get back home.

I want to go through a couple of examples. I will not go through a lot because many of the examples members have raised are consistent with the ones I have, but I have a couple of different examples that I think deserve our attention. This example is not actually a constituent of mine but it is someone who was in the bed next to me when I had some heart surgery about three years ago. I befriended this fellow, but I have not had a lot of contact with him since. He is in the Australian Defence Force over in Afghanistan and he wants to return to Western Australia to have some time off with his family. He has to go to Darwin because it is the home base for his brigade, division or whatever the group is. In Darwin, everyone who returns to Australia has to undergo two weeks in quarantine.

That is appropriate. In his case, that is at the cost of the ADF. Of course, he wants to get back to Western Australia. Under the rules, he will have to quarantine once again in Western Australia. He will have to have two weeks' quarantine in Darwin, which probably has a better record than we have on COVID, and when he comes into Western Australia, he will have to do two weeks' quarantine again. In Western Australia, the quarantine time will come off his leave tab. I do not know the outcome of this yet, but I hope he can quarantine at home. If it happens to be in a hotel, he will not be with his family. He makes the point that if that time has to come off his leave tab, it is unlikely he will be able to come home for Christmas. To me, for someone who is overseas with the ADF in Afghanistan to have to work through that process to get back to see his family and may not be able to come home for Christmas is terribly challenging. We are told—I have no way of seeing how the process is going—that if there is a 48-hour gap between finishing his quarantine in Darwin and coming into Western Australia, he can self-quarantine at home. That would be much better than having to quarantine in a hotel. I guess that it is an example of a situation that is a little different. I am sure it does not quite fit the rules, but the rules as they are defined would be a terrible imposition on this person who is representing our nation with the ADF in Afghanistan.

I have another very recent example of a case we took to the minister's office. Again, I acknowledge the help of the minister's office to work through it, and we hope we will get a good outcome. I refer to an 87-year-old who wanted to come back into Western Australia. The 87-year-old drove from Darwin down to the border, not far from Kununurra. He sought to get a G2G PASS before he drove to the border. It is a five-hour drive from Darwin to Kununurra and the border is not far from Kununurra. It is quite a substantial drive. He had his G2G PASS, hit the border and the G2G PASS was not accepted. The police at the border said, "No, we do not accept your G2G pass." Of course, the 87-year-old who, for all intents and purposes had what he thought was an approval to come into Western Australia, was then stuck quite remotely on the Northern Territory side of the border with Western Australia. He would have had to quarantine in Kununurra. That was accepted. We talked to the minister's office. I hope and I think that the minister's office intervened, and within a short period of time, he was able to get a pass and come into Western Australia. I guess that highlights that it takes the intervention of a member of Parliament going through the minister's office to achieve that outcome. In this case, the person had a G2G PASS. Once again, we see examples of what appear to be inconsistencies. We recognise that they are challenging. As I said, one thing that would really help is to have a go-to point that members of Parliament can ring, with the same people answering who have pooled the issues that have come in to make sure we get some consistency in applying the process, so we can get our people—Western Australians—home to Western Australia.

There is no appeal process. I suppose going through a member of Parliament's office is one way to appeal a decision if someone does not get the right outcome, as has been highlighted by the many people who have applied to come into the state. Some have had to apply three or four times, if not more. The strongest advice we give them is to include as much information as they can when they put in their application, and then many of them get the right outcome at the end of the day, but we would like to think, as mentioned by the member for Hillarys, that if there was one application, one process and all the right information is attached, it will get passed and away we go. Applying for something three, four or five times would seem to be a terrible waste of resources. There needs to be some clarity around exactly what people need to know to ensure that when they go online to make that application, it is understood, and they can achieve the outcome on their first go. In some cases, as with the 87-year-old I talked about, people can be isolated in a very remote part of the state. Western Australia comprises one-third of the nation, and it does not border on to too many other towns and places that have high population numbers. Where we finish up is a fairly isolated spot. If a person has driven, as in this case, 500 kilometres to get to that point and they cannot come in, that is a pretty big imposition and it is not right.

One more example relates to someone I know quite well from Kununurra whose business entails pest control. He does a lot of work on remote pastoral leases in the Kimberley and the Northern Territory. Prior to COVID, his job was to drive many thousands of kilometres over the Northern Territory border to deal with pest control on pastoral leases and other services that he provides along those lines. Supposedly, he would be 3 000 kilometres from the nearest COVID case, and he has no way of managing that other than the minute he steps over that border and comes back in, he has to quarantine for two weeks, which essentially means he cannot do it. There are many unique circumstances and we need some ministerial intervention on many of these cases to make it work, because as time goes on, tension will build on this front. I think there is very strong support from the Western Australian community. My electorate is exactly the same as has been articulated in our newspapers, that no-one wants to see the hard border lifted, but as time goes on that tension will build. We are seeing it play out in some other states and we need to be ready for that. I, for one, and certainly my colleagues share the view that we want the Western Australian government to succeed in this. We do not want it to get it wrong. Heeding the views of opposition will be important in navigating that. We are the litmus paper for many in our electorate and as those views come through we will certainly take them up and in the right spirit. Having some good processes to help the people who come to us in very unique and difficult circumstances is something we should work on to ensure that those Western Australians can get back into our state to be with their family, friends and loved ones.

On behalf of the Nationals WA—I do not know whether my colleagues will talk on this—we certainly support the motion and hope that the spirit of what we are putting up is consistent with what happened at the start of the lockdown.

We got changes on many of the issues that we raised out of the media straight through to ministers and/or the Premier, because Parliament was not running, to make it work. We hope that the spirit of that is taken up, because there are many varied issues that are very challenging, and it will take some good head space and good thought to get processes that ensure that our people, Western Australians in particular, are able to get back into Western Australia.

MR Z.R.F. KIRKUP (Dawesville) [6.14 pm]: I, too, join the Liberal and National Parties to add my voice to the motion moved by the member for Hillarys —

That this house notes that the lack of transparency and consistency of the G2G PASS approval process has caused significant stress, anxiety and distress to Western Australians who are trying to legally return home, and calls on the government to create a clearer, simpler and more consistent process to allow local residents to return to Western Australia whilst continuing to protect our state from COVID-19.

When the border arrangements were first put in place I think all of us would have undoubtedly been confronted and inundated with messages from constituents and others trying to return to Western Australia, or we had to help those in our communities better understand the restrictions put in place. Ultimately, with the border arrangement now in operation, there has to be a capacity for people to return home to our state. More often than not the constituents I have spoken to are people who have been stranded in the eastern states who do not have the capacity to return home and for whatever reason have not found the process to be straightforward or offer much clarity. In the first number of days, weeks and months since the border arrangements were first put into place, I understood that it would take some time to establish a clear process for those entrants who would and would not be allowed into the state, but in that time I have found a number of inconsistencies with how it has been applied or a lack of certainty. Every single speaker has echoed that in this place, and that is not at all a reflection on the work of the Western Australia Police Force or, I would argue, the very many public servants and defence personnel who serve alongside at the State Health Incident Control Centre. It really is a reflection on the lack of certainty that people face in these uncertain times.

The pandemic already presents a level of anxiety for members in the community. Recently, I had the opportunity to provide a survey for people in my district, which had nearly 650 responses. I asked a number of questions to people in my community to effectively get a feeling for how they have felt during the COVID-19 period, and a couple of things might stand out to this chamber. When asked whether they felt isolated, five per cent of people surveyed said they felt isolated prior to COVID-19 and 10 per cent say they feel isolated now. Five per cent of people said they felt they had financial difficulties before and 10 per cent say they have financial difficulties now. On a positive note, I suspect perhaps even in the Acting Speaker's (Ms J.M. Freeman) district, which has very identified communities who work very closely together, this figure would probably be at a higher level, but in my district 13 per cent of people said that they felt close as a community before and 46 per cent of people believe they are now closer as a community. That is probably one of the silver linings, if we can use that term during a pandemic. The question about how people felt about the future is concerning because it shows a level of anxiety in the community. In my district, 13 per cent of people said that they were worried about the future prior to COVID-19, and now that is 53 per cent. More than half the people who were surveyed in my community felt concerned about the future and what that looks like. When we add to that level of anxiety the lack of certainty about whether people can return home and what that looks like, that is a significantly added burden and a very real stress.

I have zero concern for those who have gone away on a holiday since COVID hit and found it difficult to return. They were advised by both the Premier and Prime Minister that people should not undertake any unnecessary travel. Indeed, in the statement made by the Premier, which I read into this place in an earlier debate on 17 March, he said very specifically that people have been warned not to travel outside for unnecessary reasons. Since the border arrangements have been put in place, if someone has undertaken recreational travel and somehow complains that they cannot get back into the state, they are really on their own. But there needs to be a clear and certain process for those who had to travel for compassionate reasons such as work, education and training, or for reasons that help sustain any number of mitigating factors that are not the normal holiday-type travel. There are people in my district, for example, who are not sure whether they can leave Western Australia to visit someone who might be terminally ill and very close to death.

The first case that comes to mind is a lady called Annette from Erskine who returned to Western Australia after travelling to Victoria to visit her daughter who was very ill. At the time, she had approval, so she decided to travel home to Western Australia. When she arrived at Perth Airport, she was told that the approval had changed—there and then at the airport. We can all imagine that if people have a lack of certainty and there is already a high level of anxiety and stress, a lot of them will feel overwhelmed, isolated and concerned about the future. Annette told me that there was no way that she would have travelled from Victoria and left her daughter had she known that she would have to go into hotel quarantine in Western Australia. She did not have the capacity. In her representations to me, she said that she was expressly told that she would be able to isolate at home, but that was not the case. She told me that the approval was effectively changed upon her arrival at Perth Airport and then she was forced into hotel quarantine. I spoke to her a number of times while she was in hotel quarantine to understand how she was going and to give her a bit of emotional support. There was a very real level of stress. She was very concerned and upset. She was crying on the phone about the circumstances she was facing.

I do not think any of us have any concerns with the understandable situation that we have to have a hotel quarantine process. That decision is reflective of a national cabinet-led approach. We need to ensure that people are adequately cared for in a hotel setting if there is a particularly high risk of transmission in the community from where they hail. Of course, that means Victorians and, in some cases, people from New South Wales. All members in this place will have family members who assume that they have a high level of understanding of the intimate details of the government's inner workings. My family members are asking me whether they can travel to see a very sick individual in Victoria and New South Wales and then come back. I simply do not know. I cannot provide them with that advice. The situation can change quickly and there is not much certainty about whether they can return. I have suggested that they should not do that until they effectively get approval. They should provide the date that they would like to return to Western Australia and if the approval is granted, they will have some certainty about returning to WA.

The reason the opposition has moved this motion is that there is a lack of transparency and consistency. We have heard over and over again about people who have been denied entry into Western Australia five or six times, but on the seventh time, even though their circumstances have not largely changed, they are granted entry. That is not an unusual process. All of us support the work of the Western Australian police and will uphold any measure the government takes to protect the health and wellbeing of Western Australians. In that respect, all of us are on team WA. But there has to be a way to offer a level of certainty to people who need to get home. The member for Warren-Blackwood, the member for Hillarys and I have spoken about this a number of times. We need to prioritise the return of stranded Western Australians. We need to make sure that if people from our state who have been over east need to come home, they have the opportunity to do so safely. That is important. We are not talking about opening up the already porous hard border to a greater number of people. We are saying that if Western Australians need to come home, they should be provided with a level of certainty and security about what requirements they have to meet to return home safely.

There is already a significant level of stress and anxiety in the community, and that has been demonstrated by the people who filled out my survey. They are worried about their future. I do not think we should add to that in any way, shape or form. All we are really asking is that the government say that if people meet a certain level of requirement, and fit within some framework, they can be certain that unless something deteriorates quickly, they can return home. Depending on the locality from which they have departed, they may have to go into hotel quarantine or stay in isolation at home for 14 days, but that has to be a sustainable circumstance going forward. At the moment, Western Australia is maintaining seven hotels. New South Wales Premier Berejiklian has suggested that other states are not picking up enough of the slack. By capita and by gross numbers, Western Australia is looking after the second largest number of people in our hotel system at the moment.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: And we are taking the second highest number of international arrivals as well.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I suspect that is because we are on the west coast.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: When someone compares us with South Australia, they neglect to consider that South Australia does not take the international arrivals that we take.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: That is right. Of course, because we are on the west coast and we are a gateway to Africa, Europe and anything to the west of us really, we are that international port. Similarly, because Sydney is the largest major airport and a lot more flights go into and out of that city, that is why New South Wales is picking up a large share of the burden and Victoria is not taking any international arrivals at the moment; they are all going to South Australia or New South Wales.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: No, mainly Sydney and Perth.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: There we go. At the moment, Victoria is not taking any. Western Australia is picking its fair share. We are suggesting that Western Australian residents should be able to get home with a level of certainty and security.

Recently, I was at an event at the Port Bouvard Recreation and Sporting Club and a gentleman named Mick spoke to me about some ideas he had. One that I thought had quite a lot of merit was the idea of offering people who come from low-risk states the option to do hotel quarantine or wear an ankle bracelet at home. In that way, they would have some level of certainty and would not be putting a burden on the hotel system. We are already almost at capacity. I know that the government is looking at expanding that cap and including more hotels. In the long term, we need to make sure that if Western Australians can do so in a safe manner, they can quarantine at home and not stay in a hotel. That is one of the issues that Annette has. That is one of the issues my mother has. She is not sure whether she can go to Queensland and come back to Western Australia. To be perfectly frank, she cannot afford to pay for the cost of the hotel quarantine that would come with it. She certainly cannot afford it as part of her employment, as her leave has already been depleted. There needs to be a level of certainty so that people can plan their lives, particularly in stressful events, such as Annette is experiencing with her very ill daughter.

We appreciate that the minister will undoubtedly go through the process by which people can enter Western Australia. I think quite a significant process is undertaken as part of the G2G PASS app. I had interaction with the G2G PASS app only when there were intrastate border restrictions, and I had the app on my phone because I had to travel to the south west region for training.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: That is what it was developed for, yes.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Yes, and now we have opened that up more broadly and that scale may have created challenges initially. I imagine it is working relatively well. It is just that at different times, constituents have said to us that they were told one thing but found something else upon arrival.

What I found interesting after recently delving into the app is that mobile phone reception is required for the app to operate, which is quite difficult—the member for Kalgoorlie would attest to this—for those who live near our more remote border with the Northern Territory and South Australia. That presents a challenge in itself if we have to rely on an app that requires a level of mobile phone reception, as people cannot get reception in some areas.

Again, this is really just suggesting that at this time it is important to provide better certainty, clarity and transparency in how a G2G PASS application is processed. We cannot continue to expect people to feel that they are being dealt with unjustly or that they are not fully aware of the circumstances that they will face when they return to Western Australia. We need some clarity and assurance from the government. In all other respects, the government is quite prescriptive about many things to do with COVID-19. There are a lot of prescriptions, including medical and clinical advice. I know that there is a lot of clinical advice. Everything is very clearly stepped out: if this happens, this must be undertaken; if the person does this, this must occur. That is why the opposition has been keen to understand what will happen with the outbreak plans. The outbreak plans very clearly dictate that if something happens in a congregated living environment, such as a residential aged-care facility, a prison, a commercial vessel or an offshore resource processing facility, certain events will be triggered and actions will be undertaken. These plans are in place and very prescriptive action will occur if there is a COVID-19 confirmed patient. Similar detail must exist and we ask that it be provided to the people of Western Australia so that they can have a better understanding of the level of transparency and what is required of them so they can come home. Thankfully, our WA nurses will return home after 14 days of isolation in Victoria. We all want that level of certainty. We need to make sure that we can get our Western Australians home safely and in a manner that is consistent with the advice of the Chief Health Officer. An important part of that is better clarity about how the G2G PASS and the associated approvals system works. I look forward to hearing more about that from the minister.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe) [6.30 pm]: I clearly will not go through the whole issue, but I rise to support the motion. As has been indicated by all parties in the debate to date, we hold the police in high regard but it seems, minister, that some disjoin is preventing them from doing their work. I will talk about only one example but it reflects the examples that we have already heard. It just seems that the decisions do not make any sense. After lodging multiple applications, approval to travel is given, even though the same information is often presented each time.

I refer to a family comprising Jessica, Chris and baby Grace. Since giving birth to Grace, Jessica has been struggling and has not been able to cope. They are interstate but the families of both Jessica and Chris live in Perth. They have no support network at all. Grace has been having trouble feeding and is not putting on weight, which has added to the considerable distress that her mother is experiencing. Jessica's partner's job was significantly curtailed. They were in significant financial stress and because of that, they applied to come back to Perth. It took four applications to get through. The first three applications were rejected. It is enormously distressing for these people. The fourth application was accepted. The support from the Western Australia Police Force and its officers has been excellent, and I am grateful for that support.

I guess we would hear the same story in other cases. It seems as though it is idiosyncratic because each time an application is considered, it is considered new and afresh. If the minister looked at these cases, I am certain that she would say, "No, this is crazy. Come on, let's just sort this one out", and I am sure she does that when she is approached. It seems to be either one of two things: first, the criteria and qualifications are not clear and individual police have to make an interpretation themselves; or, second, they are so overwhelmed with this activity, they are making decisions on the run and that sometimes means that situations that are very obvious should be approved. Do we need to use police resources? Can we use other resources rather than the police? Police are highly skilled, highly trained and expensive resources. Can we use better trained and informed people? Otherwise, is it possible to revisit and codify? I will not say that this issue has swamped my office but it is occupying a large amount of my time. As I said, minister, we are very grateful for the support that has been given but it does not make any sense that we are getting multiple applications and that Western Australian citizens cannot get home and get the support that they require. With that, I thank the minister for her time.

MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland — Minister for Police) [6.34 pm]: I thank the opposition for raising this topic. I do not agree with the motion but I certainly think it is an issue worth airing in this Parliament. A lot of people have commented that we are living in unprecedented and challenging times. These are very shocking and terrible times worldwide for so many people and their families. So many people have been through phenomenal hardship. Earlier in the year, we saw images of people dying in villages and in hospitals in the north of Italy without any family around them. Families were not informed for one, two or three days that their loved one had died. We saw scenes of mass burial sites in villages in the north of Italy. We saw scenes of people in New York digging large gravesites, and the banking of coffins and the like. It was very, very shocking.

My heart goes out to the people in Victoria. I feel for those people with family members in nursing homes whom they have not been able to visit, they have not known what was going on, they could not clarify whether their loved one was still in a nursing home or had been moved to a hospital and they could not make their own arrangements to transfer their loved one to a hospital. There are so many shocking issues.

I, too, acknowledge that some Western Australian families are doing it tough and that they have faced more than challenging circumstances. I have great empathy and compassion for all of them. I do not think any office has received more phone calls and correspondence about the challenging circumstances that families are facing than my office. This is a very serious illness and pandemic. I started by talking about people right around the world, especially those in Victoria who are doing it tough. We are fortunate here in Western Australia because we have largely kept COVID out of the community. We have not had community transmission for months. Most of the issues occurred early on with the arrival of cruise ships, which the McGowan government dealt with more effectively as a result of the measures it took compared with most other governments.

I am incredibly empathetic to the circumstances that I have heard outlined in various cases today. I cannot imagine what it would be like to not be able to see a loved one—a mum, a dad, a sister, a brother or a child—because of COVID restrictions. I understand that it is particularly challenging for people with mental health issues or those who are pregnant to be forced into hotel quarantine. It is also a hardship for those who are healthy and who have to be cooped up for a couple of weeks with a couple of young children in a hotel room that does not have a balcony and with no opportunity to go outside. It is challenging. I know that it has been really difficult for people and that they have faced a burden because of it. We have taken those precautions for the benefit of the whole community because we do not want to deal with the consequences of COVID getting out of control. We do not want to have a situation such as the one that has evolved in Victoria, which is not as bad as it is in many other places around the world. The challenges and hardships that families and the community would suffer should there be an outbreak would be a next level quantum leap. It is all a matter of balance, and it is about trying to get things right. I also understand that many people are in financial stress, and their financial stress may be further exacerbated by being rejected for a G2G PASS or forced into hotel quarantine. We have made all the decisions that we have—some of them are pretty tough decisions—for the greater good of the whole community. We have made those decisions, based on health advice, to keep COVID out of Western Australia.

With respect to our police, people have said that they are very supportive of the police and do not want to criticise the police, yet there has certainly been criticism of some of the decisions that have been made by the police on G2G PASS applications. Western Australia Police Force officers have rejected a significant number of travellers because the Quarantine (Closing the Border) Directions exist. It is not because our police officers lack compassion or transparency in their decision-making.

We are in a state of emergency, and we are continually reviewing the restrictions and directions. Our State Emergency Coordinator, Commissioner Chris Dawson, has done a stunning job. He has done an amazing job. He is a highly competent and most hardworking individual. He has just come back from a three-week break, and Deputy Commissioner Dreiberger acted in his absence. He, too, did an outstanding job during that period. Like other senior police, he also has key responsibilities in dealing with our COVID situation on a day-to-day basis.

As part of the process to safeguard our community, the state border closed on 5 April 2020. Advice was provided to the community that the border was closing, and those people who were outside Western Australia were advised to return by 5 April 2020 if possible. The Western Australia Police Force developed the “good to go” or G2G PASS, which is a world-leading system. The state should be very proud that it has been incredibly effective in assisting the Western Australia Police Force to keep our community safe. As I interjected earlier, the G2G PASS was initially developed to facilitate the intrastate borders. That was a very innovative thing we did here in Western Australia. We were desperate to protect the Kimberley and the Pilbara and all our regions and to keep COVID out of them. Because of that early work that the WA Police Force did in developing the G2G PASS for people to travel intrastate, we have now been able to use that to assist with our state border. I hasten to add that Tasmania has now adopted our G2G PASS, and I understand that Queensland is also looking at using it. I note for the record that the WA Police Force owns the intellectual property associated with the G2G PASS. This is a different way of doing things. It has meant a much quicker and smoother transition of people through our border and airports than has existed in other states and territories.

At all times during its development, the primary objective of the G2G PASS has been focused on ensuring that the best information is obtained from an applicant to ensure that their travel is essential, the risk associated with them is identified and appropriate risk mitigation strategies and formal directions are applied to manage that risk. The G2G PASS and approval process has been central to protecting the community of Western Australia from COVID-19. It is a big part of why we have had 150 days without community spread.

These processes do restrict entry and necessitate quarantine requirements for those wishing to enter the state. The G2G PASS and approval process has been heavily supported by industry and business as an effective tool to keep the state’s critical industries operating and enable supporting staff who work within those industries to continue working. Compassionate applications are received by the Western Australia Police Force. They are assessed on their

merits, with requirements for supporting evidence and justification of significant hardship. The Western Australia Police Force is open and accountable and prepared to review any decision made for a G2G PASS application. Although I think there has been a little criticism that some people have had to apply two or three times to get a pass, it is a matter of the police taking a safety-first attitude to applications. The fact that someone can provide further information with a further application is an indication that the police are not lacking in compassion; they are not just making a hard and fast arbitrary decision—they are prepared to consider further evidence and further information.

As I understand it, the quality of applications, as for any application-based process, varies dramatically. Everyone's capacity to be able to state their case is going to be different. People's idea of what they need to attach will be different. Some people who no doubt have a very meritorious case make poor applications in the first instance. Upon providing further information, with a bit of assistance, they are able to make a better application that better describes their need to travel into Western Australia. However, at the opposite end, there are no doubt less worthy cases whereby people write stunning applications, and not all the information in the application will necessarily be true. That information will need to be independently verified.

Of course, another thing that changes is the current health advice. When we first heard of that outbreak in Victoria, we moved very quickly, and a number of applications from Victoria were effectively automatically rejected. People were advised that they would need to apply again because, effectively, the ground rules for Victorians entering Western Australia needed to change.

A person seeking approval to enter Western Australia must provide information to justify the travel as essential, as defined within the Quarantine (Closing the Border) Directions. The categories of essential travel are defined within the directions. A returning Western Australian resident is not a category of traveller within the directions; it is information that contributes to the assessment of an application for entry. Assessment and approval of applications is based on individual assessments by a person with the requisite authority defined within the directions to assess the category applied for. WA entry processes have always focused on individual vetting and assessment of every applicant. The G2G PASS was developed to improve the application processes to remediate inefficiencies associated with the previous WA manual entry application processes. I understand that some of the other states are still dealing with a range of things manually, which makes data checking very, very difficult.

The G2G PASS provides a single system approach, which has provided significant efficiencies to the state and the community of Western Australia. The implementation of the G2G PASS has reduced inconsistency in the assessment process by improving the systematic approach to information collection and collation. Information requirements are subject to change, and changes in policy and direction may occur as a result of environmental factors, such as an increase in community transmission in another jurisdiction. For example, if there was an increase in community transmission in New South Wales tomorrow, the Department of Health would provide information to police. Some people might criticise that as changing the rules or standards, but it is an important flexibility if we need to be stricter on people coming from one area rather than another.

The G2G PASS is world-leading because it is readily accessible through the Department of the Premier and Cabinet website and app stores. It is able to be tracked and reported against and it provides a user-friendly application with instructions on how to conduct the process and meet the information requirements. It enables the entire application process to occur utilising a single device, such as a telephone, without the need to print and scan documents. The traveller makes the application through the system depending on their category of travel and completes the necessary declarations online. The application prompts the traveller to provide information. The application is then triaged, assessed and responded to within a single system. The information is captured and presented to the assessor in formats that align with checking against police indices to verify the veracity of the information, improving the thoroughness of the assessment process. When rejected, the traveller receives notification of the reason and instruction on what further information might be required for further assessment. When approved, the traveller receives notification and instruction on what directions will be applied on entry into Western Australia, along with a QR code. On arrival at the airport border, the traveller produces the QR code on their mobile telephone and the code is scanned by the greeting officer. The officer conducting the scanning can immediately see any internal notes or comments relating to the application and the applicant to identify the directions and conditions to be applied. The scanning of the QR code creates a reportable arrival event that automatically feeds into the compliance and assurance system, identifying the arrival quarantine requirements and quarantine location. The record created provides a historical time line of travel for the individual, assists consideration by reviewers for future applications for travel, and identifies any inconsistencies in applications by the same individual. The record of reportable events relating to the application, assessment and arrival provide for the easy identification of the parties involved in the entire process and also supports any investigations into possible breaches of the Emergency Management Act. The G2G PASS is currently utilised by the vast majority of travellers arriving in Western Australia by air. It has significantly streamlined the applications and arrival processes at airports and borders. Travellers have chosen to move to this forum based on realised time savings and its relative ease of use.

Any system that requires an individual assessment is going to be open to subjectivity and therefore questions of inconsistency. The implementation of the G2G PASS has reduced inconsistency by improving the systematic

approach to information collection and collation. The time frames associated with the G2G assessment process are less than half of those associated with the previous manual process. The G2G PASS provides reporting capabilities that were unavailable before its implementation, including the ability to track individuals and transactions within an application. Airport and border operations have been enhanced, with Western Australia Police Force processing time being reduced by an average of 50 per cent. This has translated to a better customer experience with the arrival process and an increased ability to assess and check applications prior to the traveller arriving in the state. The overall risk to the Western Australian community has been significantly reduced because of the G2G PASS. The ability to collate, collect and report on information relating to travellers has been greatly improved. Better information capturing in the first instance has provided for an improved assessment and identification of the risks associated with individual travellers. The system then provides for the definition and communication of appropriate directions to be applied to manage identified risks and to keep our community safe.

I also thank those members who acknowledged the work being done in my office. My main point of contact with people has been Mr John Gangell, who has been doing an amazing job around the clock. He knows more about who is accepted and what the circumstances are than I do because he hears about it every day. He raises the issues directly with police in an attempt to assist people through the process as much as he can. I think he has been doing an outstanding job. The WA Police Force, too, has done an outstanding job. The development of the G2G PASS is world-class. A small company in Western Australia has worked with police on this. As I said, it has been adopted by Tasmania and it looks as though it will be adopted in Queensland. I suspect that it might be taken up internationally in the future because I think it is a very good system.

A couple of other questions were raised on the way through. The member for Hillarys said that there were not proper restrictions on flight crews. He suggested that flight crews could go to a hotel and then go out for a meal and perhaps somewhere for a drink and then to a convenience store to purchase something. I do not know where the member got that information from, but domestic and international flight crew have to remain inside the allocated hotel. That is the direction. They can leave their room to receive urgent medical attention at a hospital or to escape an imminent threat to their safety but, effectively, they have to stay at the hotel for the duration of their layover.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: What if they are based in WA and fly here from over east?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: They would get a direction and they certainly cannot go out for meals and so forth. They cannot go out for meals and down to the shops or whatever.

It was also suggested that people other than the police could do these assessments. There are some very good reasons for police doing the assessments.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: I did not suggest that.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: No. I think maybe it was the member for Cottesloe. Someone suggested that police were an expensive resource.

Dr D.J. Honey: I said that the police were an expensive resource.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: The point I will make is this: I suspect that those people who have been in touch with members of Parliament are probably all very genuine in their cause of concern. Unfortunately, though, as we have seen through some of the breaches, some people in the community lie on their forms, produce false documents and say that they will do one thing but then do another. There are people in our community who we know cannot be trusted and who provide false information. The police are in the best position to make an assessment of that. As part of their training from very early on, our new recruits are put on the booze buses where they must deal with the public and get exposed to and become very experienced in dealing with people who are trying to spin them a line.

Another reason is that the police have access to the police database. I am confident that if someone with a significant criminal history was given approval to stay at home, no matter what their circumstance, and then something occurred, people would say that surely we should have known that that person was an incredible flight risk. Police have the capacity to examine their own internal databases. Those databases are not open to other people to look at. Someone's criminal history and other history that the police might have recorded is relevant to the assessment of an application, particularly when making a decision about whether someone can be trusted to quarantine at home or whether we believe any of their story and want them in the state at all at this time.

I am very proud of the way WA Police has responded to this. It is working on other future innovations. I think there is a very exciting prospect for people to use utilise their mobile phone while at home quarantine. People will set a designated geographic boundary via GPS and we will know whether people have taken the phone outside that boundary and also be able to contact that person via an app or by ringing their phone and requiring them to show a live picture of their face—not a photo—on the phone so that we can check whether they are at home. Police have conducted over 40 000 home-detention checks since the COVID-19 pandemic began. That has been very onerous on WA Police Force. More people are now required to be in hotel quarantine, which is less intensive for the Western Australia Police Force to check.

Technology can be our friend, and I believe that the Western Australia Police Force is well advanced in that. If we move to that new application for suitable applicants who agree to trial this system for home quarantine if they use an app on their phone, it will save a lot of police time and return more police to their regular duties because they will not be required to do door-to-door home checks if it can be done electronically. Whatever number of people we determine can do that, they might be requested to show their face on their phone at their geographic location four or five times a day.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

House adjourned at 7.00 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

WATER — FIRE HYDRANTS — GERALDTON

6183. Mr I.C. Blayney to the Minister for Water:

I refer to the Government media release distributed on Thursday, 27 April 2017 titled '94 new fire hydrants to be installed across Geraldton', and I ask:

- (a) How much of the \$12.5 million State-wide program funding was allocated to Geraldton;
- (b) How much of the \$12.5 million has been spent in Geraldton as of May 2020;
- (c) List when and where the fire hydrants were installed; and
- (d) Have all 94 hydrants now been installed in Geraldton?

Mr D.J. Kelly replied:

- (a) \$517,000
- (b) \$521,000
- (c) [See tabled paper no [3616](#).]
- (d) The installation of all required fire hydrants in Geraldton has been successfully completed. Following site surveys and detailed design, four hydrants were deemed unnecessary as existing hydrants provided the required coverage.

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY — LOTTERYWEST GRANTS

6342. Mr A. Krsticevic to the Premier; Minister for Public Sector Management; State Development, Jobs and Trade; Federal–State Relations:

I refer to your media statement of 15 July 2020, titled "WA's first Common Ground finds a home in central Perth", and ask:

- (a) Can you please provide a breakdown of the \$2.3 million in Lotterywest grants including details of:
 - (i) the recipient;
 - (ii) the value of the grant; and
 - (iii) the purpose of the grant?

Mr M. McGowan replied:

Lotterywest response is:

(i)	(ii)	(iii)
UnitingCare West	\$1,134,664	towards crisis support for up to 700 people who are sleeping rough in the greater Perth area.
RUAH	\$753,350	A collaboration with UnitingCare Westn which will enable RUAH to locate and accommodate rough sleepers across Perth. The project also includes implementation of the By Name List methodology and the Regional Connections Week project.
Shelter WA Inc	\$416,854	This will directly provide at risk and vulnerable people access to shelter and emergency relief.

