



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 7 November 2024

Legislative Assembly

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THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) took the chair at 9.00 am, acknowledged country and read prayers.

PAPER TABLED

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

ALAN ROBSON, AO — TRIBUTE

Statement by Minister for Culture and the Arts

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Culture and the Arts) [9.01 am]: It is with sadness that I acknowledge the passing of Emeritus Professor Alan Robson, AO, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Western Australia and former chair of the board of trustees of the Western Australian Museum. Professor Robson played a prominent role in higher education, science and research in Western Australia. Through his involvement as chair of the Group of Eight universities, he worked tirelessly to raise the research reputation of Australian universities to ensure they remained internationally competitive. Professor Robson advocated to increase education opportunities for disadvantaged groups, having benefited from a government scholarship himself as an undergraduate. Through this he leaves a lasting legacy devoted to equity in education. Before serving as the University of Western Australia's vice-chancellor from 2004 to 2011, he had been deputy vice-chancellor and provost of the university since 1993. Professor Robson remained connected to the university throughout his retirement.

His numerous accolades include being awarded Officer of the Order of Australia in 2013, the Australian Medal of Agricultural Science and the Fiona Stanley Medal. He was inducted into the Western Australian Science Hall of Fame in 2015. Professor Robson also played prominent roles in arts and culture, including chair of the board of trustees of the Western Australian Museum, commencing in 2012. He played a critical role as an advocate for the new Museum project and as a member of its steering committee. In 2022, following his retirement from the board, he was made a fellow of the WA Museum, a rare and conspicuous honour. He also served on the board of the Black Swan State Theatre Company of Western Australia and as deputy chair of the Council of the National Library of Australia. Alan had a wonderful, humble and understated demeanour, but his intellect was razor sharp and his determination was unstoppable when required. Western Australia has lost one of its greatest public servants, as well as one of its foremost scientists.

I take this opportunity to extend my sincerest condolences to Alan's family, friends and colleagues.

GAMES INDUSTRY — GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Statement by Minister for Culture and the Arts

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Culture and the Arts) [9.03 am]: I recently attended PAX Aus 2024, Australia's biggest gaming festival. This international event, where industry and games enthusiasts gather, was held as part of Melbourne International Games Week 2024. It brought together games developers, publishers, retailers and other creative industries businesses at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. Among the many exhibits this year was a conglomerate of Western Australian games developers and studios that received travel and production support from the Cook government's digital games fund, delivered through ScreenWest as part of the WA screen industry strategy. It was an incredible experience seeing thousands of people, the majority of whom were under 40—so I looked out of place—attending PAX and interacting with the developers and publishers. WA games studios Hungry Sky, Sentient and the Unnatural Freaks Studio exhibited as part of the PAX Rising Showcase. The showcase was a selection of around 100 small independent games developers that were featured based on their potential to rise above the rest, push the industry forward or establish themselves as fan favourites. These opportunities are the kind of kickstart moments that emerging WA creative entrepreneurs need to take their projects to the next level, enabling them to make direct-to-market connections in one of the fastest growing entertainment sectors in the world.

Since the inception of the digital games fund in 2023, the Cook government has supported 34 WA games developers with funding for new games production, and five companies have been provided with business accelerator grants. Forty-nine travel support grants have also been provided to WA games studios, including some connecting them with key markets at events like this one. Game developers are trained to use immersive technology that encompasses the tools and platforms used to create and deliver immersive experiences. Western Australia's immersive technology workforce is experiencing significant growth, with a strong interrelation of skills across other industries including spatial imaging and automation technologies used in mining and health science areas. This expansion to meet demand highlights the key role these skills will play in growing our screen industry into the future, creating more jobs and, of course, diversifying the economy in the state.

GEOFF GALLOP JOHN MONASH SCHOLARSHIP — ANISH BADGERI*Statement by Minister for Education*

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Education) [9.06 am]: Madam Speaker, I have not had the opportunity to acknowledge your incredible service to this Parliament and the government of the people of Western Australia, so thank you very much.

The SPEAKER: Thank you.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I take pleasure today in informing the house that Mr Anish Badgeri has been announced as the inaugural Geoff Gallop John Monash Scholar for 2025. This scholarship is the result of the Cook Labor government's \$5 million contribution to the General Sir John Monash Foundation, which establishes a perpetual fund to create the Geoff Gallop John Monash Scholarship. This scholarship will allow university graduates to take up postgraduate studies at top overseas programs and is intended for recipients whose field of study will benefit Western Australia, and the state's goals for community resilience, equity and sustainability into the future. Applicants are assessed on their academic excellence, leadership and future capacity to have a positive impact on society and Anish is a very worthy and impressive inaugural scholar. He is a former Perth Modern School student who subsequently graduated from the University of Western Australia as a Fogarty Scholar where he completed a Bachelor of Philosophy with honours. Anish then went on to do his Master of Teaching as part of a Teach for Australia scholarship. He is currently applying his skills and knowledge as head of the learning community at Shenton College. Anish will use the Geoff Gallop John Monash Scholarship to pursue a one-year Master of Educational Leadership at the University College London. I wish Anish all the best and look forward to hearing about his achievements.

I also take this opportunity to encourage other postgraduate students to consider applying for future rounds of this scholarship, which is available to those who have graduated from a Western Australian university and whose field of study benefits at least one of the following: teaching and education, nursing, regional Western Australia, or disadvantaged communities.

DIWALI*Statement by Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests*

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests) [9.08 am]: I express my best wishes to the Indian communities of Western Australia for Diwali 2024, the festival of lights. On Sunday, 27 October 2024, the Premier and I, along with a number of my ministerial and parliamentary colleagues, had the utmost pleasure of attending the Indian Society of Western Australia Diwali Mela 2024 at Burswood Park. Diwali this year fell between 31 October and 1 November. I am pleased to say that the ISWA Diwali Mela was once again a vibrant, bustling and colourful event, with more than 40 000 people attending over the two days. The free two-day celebration included a vast array of Indian cuisine, stalls, music, dancing, a rangoli art competition, family friendly activities and a guest appearance from the Indian actor, producer, filmmaker and good friend of the member for Jandakot, Mr Boman Iran. Mr Irani wowed the crowd with his rendition of Frank Sinatra's *My Way* and made a special mention that Perth was one of his favourite cities in the world. I am proud that in addition to the ISWA's Diwali Mela, the Cook Labor government has provided funding for a number of Diwali events across the state, including those in Bunbury and Geraldton.

The ISWA Diwali Mela kicked off our government's Global Connections Through Local Events program. Under this program, administered by the Office of Multicultural Interests, the Cook Labor government has provided \$2.155 million in funding for four major community festivals presented by our culturally and linguistically diverse community associations. ISWA's Diwali Mela is the first event in this program that also includes the Perth Chung Wah Cultural Festival and Western Australia's Africa Week and Arab Festival. ISWA's Diwali Mela received funding of \$500 000 from the Office of Multicultural Interests and Lotterywest. This fully funded the spectacular event at the beautiful Burswood Park. I am sure that all my parliamentary colleagues who attended the event agree that the success and popularity of this event is evidence that the Global Connections Through Local Events funding is an investment in the future success of our multicultural society and economic prosperity.

As Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests, I am proud of the Cook government's continued investment in initiatives that highlight the cultural diversity of our state, one of our greatest strengths. As we joined millions of people around the world marking Diwali, I would like to wish all those celebrating happiness and prosperity. Happy Diwali!

WATER — WARREN–DONNELLY CATCHMENT*Statement by Minister for Water*

MS S.F. MCGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Water) [9.11 am]: I rise to inform the house that on 18 October 2024, I announced, alongside the Minister for Regional Development, the Cook government's \$2 million funding commitment for upgrades that will improve accuracy of water monitoring in the Warren–Donnelly catchment. This \$2 million announcement addresses key recommendations from the state government's southern forests

irrigation reference group, which called for increased water monitoring to improve confidence in streamflow data and catchment modelling. The funding commitment also forms part of a \$15.3 million commitment made by the Cook government to improve water security for horticultural growers in the Manjimup–Pemberton area.

I can advise that this funding will enable upgrades of up to 19 existing streamflow gauging stations, with new technology to enable access to real-time river height and streamflow data. The proposal will also repair and reinstate water monitoring infrastructure and instrumentation at the Record Brook gauging station and other research catchments to strengthen streamflow monitoring in forested areas. Two new water monitoring stations will be installed within cleared agriculture catchments, as well as 20 new farm dam monitoring stations, to boost scientific understanding of water use and capture from farm dams. The funded works also include the review and upgrade of existing groundwater monitoring infrastructure across the Warren–Donnelly catchment. The water monitoring upgrades will be delivered through the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation with the collected data to be integrated into its water measurement program.

This state government investment in streamflow monitoring will assist our growers as they adapt to the impacts of climate change and seek strengthened understanding of streamflow trends and rainfall runoff. This announcement also follows the recent Cook and Albanese government’s commitment of over \$8 million in funding for a new Doppler radar station to deliver high-quality weather data for the Manjimup–Pemberton region to provide local growers with detailed weather information. I can confirm that the Cook government is listening to the community and working to support the Warren–Donnelly growers as they seek to strengthen their water management approaches and climate resilience into the future.

TAFE — YEAR 9 CAREER TASTER PROGRAM

Statement by Minister for Training and Workforce Development

MS S.F. MCGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Training and Workforce Development) [9.14 am]: I rise to update the house on the ongoing success of the year 9 career taster program. This program is a four-year WA jobs plan commitment aimed at supporting half the cohort of year 9 students, numbering approximately 17 000, to explore the world of work each year. Midyear reporting by schools is showing that this highly successful program is continuing to go from strength to strength. So far this year more than 8 100 year 9 students from 213 schools have participated in career taster activities and around 1 000 students from other year groups have also participated. Participation from regional students continues to be strong with 39 per cent of year 9 participants living in regional and remote areas. Importantly, 29 per cent of participants were from students in priority cohorts, including First Nation students, students living with disability, students at educational risk and students from linguistically and diverse backgrounds.

TAFE colleges continue to embrace this program, delivering taster experiences to students from 213 schools, covering 37 industries as at the end of June this year. This has resulted in TAFE student participation increasing by an impressive 75 per cent. Participation has been highest in excursion and hands-on activities, giving students unique opportunities to immerse themselves in a range of industries and the career pathways within them. Employers continue to support the program, directly delivering 40 career taster experiences to students. I have seen firsthand how this program is opening up career opportunities for students that they previously did not know existed. It is also helping students to narrow down what might be the best career for them and supporting them to make beneficial subject selections to support their preferred career pathway. I look forward to seeing more positive results from this program when I receive the end-of-year reporting.

HOMELESSNESS — COMMON GROUND FACILITIES — MANDURAH AND EAST PERTH

Statement by Minister for Homelessness

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Homelessness) [9.16 am]: I rise to inform the house on the progress of the Mandurah and East Perth Common Ground projects. As part of our record \$3.2 billion investment in housing and homelessness, we have committed \$140 million in homelessness initiatives in 2024 alone, including \$92.2 million in the current state budget to ensure continuation of more than 120 critical homelessness services across Western Australia. The Mandurah and East Perth Common Ground projects are key elements of this government’s housing-first approach. The Common Ground model provides a mix of permanent housing options for people who are experiencing homelessness or on low incomes, along with wraparound support services and onsite management. Atlas Building was appointed last month as the builder to deliver the Mandurah Common Ground, a 50-unit, five-storey complex. The \$43.1 million contract was awarded to Atlas following a request for tender that closed in May 2024. The 50 self-contained units, along with communal areas, onsite support services and commercial spaces, will be delivered over five storeys on Allnutt Street. Works will commence onsite this year.

The Mandurah Common Ground is the second facility of its kind being built in Western Australia, with East Perth Common Ground currently well underway. We have a clear focus to assist people sleeping rough and give them access to appropriate accommodation and intensive wraparound supports to enable them to transition into long-term housing options.

ZOO4YOU*Statement by Minister for Environment*

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldvis — Minister for Environment) [9.18 am]: Today I would like to update the house on Zoo4You, the free-ticket initiative at Perth Zoo. This is one of many, many initiatives by the Cook Labor government aimed at providing support for families across the state. Since announcing this offer on 8 September, 372 479 tickets have been booked through the ServiceWA app providing an opportunity for people to enjoy a free day out. The free tickets were exhausted straightaway during the school holidays, with the Zoo admitting a staggering 112 224 people over the two-week period. That is a 92 per cent visitation increase in attendance year on year. Weekend ticketing has also been fully booked. To meet demand, we released an additional 20 500 free tickets on 17 October. The Saturday and Sunday tickets were instantly snapped up by the community. Although there has obviously been a higher uptake from metropolitan residents, tickets have been booked by people from right across the state, including the Peel region, Geraldton, Bunbury, Kalgoorlie and Kununurra. We even had 28 tickets booked by residents living on Christmas Island.

The intent of the free ticketing was to alleviate cost-of-living pressures, so it is heartening to see that Zoo4You is most popular with residents in lower socio-economic suburbs who might not have the discretionary funds to visit Perth Zoo. The top suburbs by the number of tickets booked were Armadale, Cockburn and Wanneroo. More than a half—57 per cent—of visitors who filled out a survey during their visit to the Zoo had not considered visiting before because of the cost. That is a staggering number of people. Again, 57 per cent of people who filled out our survey said that they were not able to access the Zoo due to cost.

We are proud to offer free zoo access during this period, supporting families who need it most. Apart from helping to alleviate cost pressures, our community members have had a great day out at the Zoo, with almost 90 per cent of attendees were satisfied with their visit. Some of the comments received over the free offer period include, I refer to my notes —

“I think it’s great and makes the zoo more accessible to people that may not be able to afford to go to the zoo otherwise. It helps to build an overall appreciation for our native flora and fauna in humanity which I really love.”

Another person said —

“Due to cost of living rises, this was an amazing idea to help families take a trip to spend time together and learn about animals and conservation.”

And another comment —

“It is great and enabled me to take my kids where I normally couldn’t as a single parent.”

Overall, Zoo4You has been embraced by the people of Western Australia and it has been—pardon the pun—a roaring success! These initiatives make a real difference for families and we will continue to work tirelessly around the clock to support those who need it most, even when others in Parliament do not. Thank you very much.

**ROYAL COMMISSION INTO INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES
TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE — PROGRESS REPORT**

Statement by Minister for Child Protection

MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Minister for Child Protection) [9.21 am]: I am proud to update the house that the Cook Labor government has reached another important milestone in the implementation of the royal commission’s recommendations aimed at keeping children and young people safe from child sexual abuse. The state government is expanding Western Australia’s mandatory reporter groups to include more professions to help keep children and young people safe. Over 30 000 early childhood workers are now legally required to report child sexual abuse under new laws that came into effect on 1 November. The reforms will keep children safer by providing training and mandating that early childhood workers report any reasonable belief there is child sexual abuse to the Department of Communities.

As the Minister for Early Childhood Education, I am aware that this sector has a critically important role in the lives of children right across WA and early childhood workers are best placed to identify and report concerns. As the Minister for Child Protection, I am also aware that the early identification and reporting of concerns is critical in supporting the child protection workforce to protect Western Australia’s children and young people from harm.

Early childhood workers join 12 other groups of mandatory reporters in WA, such as doctors, nurses, teachers, police officers, psychologists, school counsellors and ministers of religion. The next group to be added to the mandatory reporter groups, in May 2025, is youth justice workers. The expansion of the mandatory reporting groups is being staged to ensure that each group receives the necessary training and support to fulfil its mandatory reporting obligations to help workers detect the early warning signs of child sexual abuse.

Failure to make a mandatory report is an offence with a maximum penalty of \$6 000. The Cook Labor government has invested \$1.7 million to support the expansion of mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse in WA and a further

\$2 million to support compliance with mandatory reporting. Expanding the mandatory reporter groups is just one of the ways the state government is working to better protect children and young people in WA. The Cook Labor government takes child sexual abuse seriously, and we are committed to continuing this most important work.

VOICE TO PARLIAMENT

Grievance

MS M.M. QUIRK (Landsdale) [9.24 am]: I grieve to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. I reflect on the first anniversary of the unsuccessful Voice referendum. It is timely to review the many actions taken by the state Labor government to improve outcomes for First Nations Western Australians, but we would all concede that much remains to be done. I am mindful that remedial and targeted action touches not only upon minister's portfolio responsibilities; many portfolios impact upon the wellbeing of First Nations Western Australians. Policy settings must take into account cultural considerations in the health, housing, child protection, education and justice portfolios.

The minister would be acutely aware that during the referendum debate the no proponents asserted that Constitutional change would not materially alter the status quo. Instead, they argued "practical measures", largely unspecified, needed to be taken. Constitutionally speaking, many of those so-called practical outcomes for Indigenous people on the ground are the responsibility of the states. The no camp was disingenuous in advancing the misleading argument: why should special provision be made for one group? Inferentially, this argument suggests that one group is getting an unjust advantage over others. The notion of equality before the law, especially within the justice system as it stands, needs closer analysis. It is trite to declare that all Western Australians should be equal before the law. What is perhaps not universally understood is that whilst laws apply equally to everyone, in practice, equal outcomes are not achieved. It is substantive equality that we must strive for.

Although ostensibly applying equally to everyone, some laws have unequal application, disproportionately impacting on a particular racial group. In order to achieve substantive equality, maybe it is time we consider the use of racial impact statements. Like environmental or fiscal impact statements, racial impact statements are predictive tools used in policymaking to determine whether pending bills, if enacted, are likely to create or exacerbate disparate outcomes among people of different ethnicities or races. Racial impact statements are used to evaluate potentially adverse outcomes or the inequity of proposed legislation prior to adoption and implementation. They assist lawmakers in detecting unforeseen consequences at an early stage.

A number of states in the US have passed such laws. They emerged to combat obvious racial disparity in the criminal justice system, evidenced by massive and disproportionate incarceration rates for African American and Latino males. I have visited and spoken to US policy advocates and legislators on the issue. Each US state operates slightly differently but, generally speaking, proponents of new laws must focus on how they will ensure that any predicted inequality can be moderated through public policy mechanisms, administrative measures or the provision of resources for other remedial programs. The statements do not mandate action. With early identification, policymakers may then be able to modify legislation that would worsen existing racial disparities. Practically speaking, it is important to address a policy's unwarranted effects before it is adopted, as it is more difficult to reverse policies once they have been implemented. The results of this process are for the information of lawmakers only, but it may give rise to inviting public comment, thereby increasing levels of accountability. Alternatively, it is argued, they should perhaps even go further and include affirmative steps to mitigate inequality.

I will give two simple local historical examples. Both relate to the criminal justice system, but I envisage the racial impact process could have application in the child protection sphere or even potentially the public health arena. When I had the role of corrective services minister, many people from remote WA were being imprisoned for driving without a licence or unregistered. Invariably, they were Aboriginal. On its face, the road traffic law should apply to everyone equally. On further inspection, it was clear that many people in remote communities did not have a licence; hence, there were few in town to teach learner drivers or enable them to get their log book hours and comply with other requirements, and a licensing centre to register a car or take a driving test was hundreds of kilometres away. With no-one in town holding a licence, how could the licensing centre even be accessed? As the minister knows, there is a strong and pressing cultural imperative to attend funerals, often a distance away. How could the community travel to attend? Sure, on its face important laws should be adhered to. In practice, it was much harder to comply in remote WA than it was in the city. In that case, the then member for Victoria Park undertook to produce a report for cabinet and ultimately a number of measures were implemented to rectify the situation. In recent years, registration has been facilitated by access online.

The other example concerns the charging and incarceration of Gene Gibson of Kiwirrkurra, a remote desert community, for the murder of Josh Warneke in Broome in 2010. In 2012, 18-year-old Gene Gibson was arrested and charged with murder after he ostensibly confessed in an interview. Mr Gibson spoke almost no English and was mentally impaired. Ultimately, the police interviews were ruled inadmissible by the Supreme Court, and the charge was downgraded to manslaughter. Mr Gibson pleaded guilty and spent nearly five years in prison until his conviction was overturned in 2017. Although a number of fatal legal errors were made by investigators, a fundamental mistake was proceeding in the absence of an interpreter. In remote WA, insufficient resources are

allocated to the provision of interpreters. Mr Gibson's first language is Pintupi, with Kukatja his second. With limited understanding of English and cognitive impairment, it was difficult for him to comprehend complex information. This is a stark example of the need to provide ready access to interpreters, especially in remote Western Australia, where more than 50 different languages are spoken.

Access to legal advice is also problematic. We need to dispassionately ask whether an English-speaking accused in the metropolitan area has faced the same fate. Crafting good policy demands that we consider how decisions will play out on the ground and affect people's lives. Racial and ethnic impact statements build a critical check for systemic racism into policymaking process and can help chart a better, fairer course.

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Aboriginal Affairs) [9.31 am]: I commence by thanking the member for Landsdale for her grievance, and I acknowledge her longstanding and unwavering commitment to justice inside and outside this Parliament. With that unwavering commitment, she also has the forensic and legal policy skills to ensure that her commitments received results when she was the Minister for Corrective Services. I refer to a number of initiatives regarding drivers' licences in remote communities from when the member for Landsdale was Minister for Corrective Services that have now made a real difference. As Minister for Corrective Services, she oversaw the creation and appointment of an assistant commissioner of Aboriginal justice within the department's executive to strengthen Indigenous leadership and direction within the department and provide high-level advice on issues relating to services for Aboriginal people as well as building Aboriginal community confidence. As minister, she also led the planning and development for the West Kimberley Regional Prison in Derby. The prison's design philosophy was that Kimberley prisoners should be housed on country, with their traditional culture informing service delivery. The unique prison architecture has allowed most prisoners to live in community-style shared households, doing their own cooking, cleaning and laundry. The minister's vision was that by developing prisoners' independent living skills and self-determination, the likelihood of reoffending and returning to custody would be reduced. That vision would have played out, but, unfortunately, the Labor Party lost government. Her vision endured, however, as it was built on common sense and justice.

Building on the member for Landsdale's legacy, the Labor government has progressed new reforms to address the disproportionate impacts Aboriginal people experience with the justice system. In 2020, imprisonment for unpaid fines was all but extinguished by a suite of reforms made to the Fines, Penalties and Infringement Notices Enforcement Act 1994. Alongside this strict new provision surrounding imprisonment for fine default was the introduction of a new work and development permit scheme to allow people expressing hardship to undertake work and development activities as a means of reducing their fine debt. Drawing on similar schemes from the east coast, the WA scheme commenced in September 2020 and is available for people who may be experiencing hardships. Those eligible can apply to complete their approved activities, such as unpaid work, mental health treatment or an educational development course under the supervision of a sponsor in place of paying the amount owed.

In addition to the justice initiatives, the Labor government has continued its efforts to close the gap in social outcomes for Aboriginal people. I acknowledge this is an ongoing challenge. The government signed up to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap in 2020 along with the commonwealth government, other jurisdictions, the Western Australian Local Government Association and the coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak organisations, the Coalition of Peaks. Significantly, this is the first national agreement to be developed in genuine equal partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through their representatives on the national Coalition of Peaks. The next meeting is in Perth on the fifteenth of this month. The national agreement provides an important mechanism to incorporate the voices and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia in policy development and reform. We have been very fortunate in Western Australia with the involvement of our strategic partner, the Aboriginal Advisory Council of Western Australia, and our Coalition of Peaks partners, the Aboriginal Health Council of WA and the Council of Aboriginal Services WA.

Since its inception, our government has made significant investments into delivering on the commitments under the 10-year national agreement and have developed implementation plans that outline our activities, which align with our Aboriginal empowerment strategy. Notably, this government has invested in building WA's Aboriginal community-controlled sector, headlined by \$6 million in funding to establish an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation peak body, now the Council of Aboriginal Services WA, and to continue to support the Aboriginal Health Council of WA. The Cook government, in partnership with Lotterywest, also awarded \$3.4 million in grants to 16 ACCOs to support community services for Aboriginal people across Western Australia. Significant funding has also been given for programs, such as the \$31.1 million to continue the Aboriginal community connectors program, the \$8.3 million for the Geraldton Aboriginal short-stay accommodation project and the \$18.3 million towards the construction of a new south west Aboriginal health hub in Bunbury, just to name a few.

We are very proud that last year, our government reached a settlement agreement supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who worked in Western Australia for little or no wages between 1936 and 1972. This settlement is recognition of the wrongs of the past. Throughout the process, the WA government worked with applicants to resolve the proceedings in a respectful and cooperative way. This settlement was an opportunity to acknowledge the valuable contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have made to our state, both past and present.

As a minister, I have identified several key priorities in Aboriginal affairs that I think can effect real lasting change to the lives of Aboriginal people. These include economic development, native title agreement-making and education. Our government has very much been committed to Aboriginal economic development, particularly in remote areas, and offers a collection of supports designed to activate Aboriginal economic development opportunities. As many are aware, Western Australia is a native title state, with over 100 determinations. We have been actively working to resolve native title compensation liabilities for agreement-making and the implementation of partnership approaches. This is designed to provide an ongoing sustainable foundation for delivering positive social, economic and cultural outcomes for native title groups. As the Minister for Education; Aboriginal Affairs, education is a high priority for me. I have visited and spoken to many people across the state on important educational themes to help with the education of Aboriginal people, especially remote communities.

I conclude by once again acknowledging the work over many years by the member for Landsdale, and I thank her for her grievance. Her record and commitment to social justice will have a long legacy in this place.

Thank you very much.

SCHOOL BUS SERVICES

Grievance

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [9.38 am]: I rise today to make a grievance about school buses, and I thank the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Transport for responding. I firstly acknowledge in the gallery John Ditchburn and Paula Barndon from BusWA, Tory Young, Bev Stanes and Paul Ardagh from Kondinin Bus Group, Fiona Mann, Kirrilee Warr and Jasmyn Allen from the Yuna bus group and Michelle Slater and Susanna Wills-Johnson from the WA Council of State School Organisations. I think the turn-up that we have had here today demonstrates the importance of rethinking the school bus policy for WA. In 2022, the Minister for Transport initiated a review of the student transport assistance policy. I was invited to join the committee for this review, which I was very pleased to do.

As a result, we saw *Bus fair: The report of the inquiry into the student transport assistance policy framework* produced. We have had two years of working with the new policy and regulations, and from where I sit, nothing has changed; the same issues seem to be on repeat. Although School Bus Services works diligently within the regulations, there is still an innate inequality in the policy that makes the chasm of fairness between city and country that much wider.

Why would anyone sign up for the new tender contracting agreements when there is no surety of future contracts? I explained in my minority report how the use of evergreen contracts versus the tendered contract model was a far more attractive model for contractors and communities —

The difference between the two models is the TCM version is a tender process meaning value for money is a feature. The ECM version is one which encourages perpetuity and therefore an investment in the operation of the service ...

The features of the Evergreen Contract Model include the security of tenure, local drivers and owners ... wage clarity and equity, and relocation options. These are the reasons this is my preferred model.

There needs to be a sweeping change to the way we approach the need to get children to school in regional areas. We cannot keep using the same model that creates the same issues year after year and expect different results. While Perth students can walk up the road and catch a bus, there are parents from the bush, such as Fiona Mann from Yuna who is in the public gallery, who drive four hours per day to get children on the bus. What mother with her own business to run should be subjected to driving 1 500 kilometres a week? Running a business or being employed is virtually impossible in this scenario. I am sure no parent in Perth must choose between getting their child on a bus or employment.

Our bus routes are being merged for no good reason. The route south of Narrogin has eight children on it and School Bus Services is merging that with another contractor. The situation in Yuna is a mess. There seems to be no acknowledgement of the distress this is causing the parents. Let me provide a brief commentary from correspondence from a parent —

Denying a child access to their bus service because the number of students briefly dipped below an arbitrary threshold, despite years of service to local families and farming communities, smacks of contempt and disdain from a government expected to govern for everyone.

Perhaps Minister Saffioti and School Bus Services should begin by engaging with the local community to understand that over the next 2–3 years, an increasing number of families in this area will need reliable bus services. Solutions have been offered by this community but seemingly ignored once again. Common sense needs to prevail and recommendation 20 of Bus Fair says the Minister for Transport should ensure the PTA consults and communicates with School Bus Advisory committees. We have families and committees in the Gallery who have been ignored.

I have another example from the Darkan area, where the promise of a solution to the bus issues was made following the *Bus fair* review. According to my notes —

Bus routes and bus types should be reviewed each year so adjustments can be made to ensure all students who live in our Shire and/or have attended Darkan Primary School are eligible for a seat to Collie the following year. Following through on Bus Fair Recommendations 20 & 21, School Bus Services is not actually consulting with local School Bus Advisory Committees in order to anticipate and prepare for the student seat numbers rather than turning kids away because they've left it too late.

Darkan in my electorate is in the middle of school districts. The consensus after the *Bus fair* report came out was that there would be enough room on the buses to Collie to carry all the children who were attending the high school. This is not the case, and parents in Darkan are calling for the recommendations from the report to be upheld as was promised in September last year. This includes consultation between the parents, the school and School Bus Services.

Kondinin Primary School has been left without a school bus for 10 years. In June 2019, School Bus Services advised that a school bus would be considered if the school provided evidence that six students could attend. When appropriate numbers were attained, the request for a school bus was still denied. Apparently, a trial may be considered in 2025. I suggest that School Bus Services commits, given student numbers have reached required levels. I applaud those from Kondinin in the public gallery who have long advocated for their community and school.

Yesterday I heard about a scenario in Pingelly in which School Bus Services is paying families to deliver their students to the local IGA in Pingelly to then be transported to Narrogin, a school outside their community, when a current bus could have been diverted to pick them up and deliver them to their local school. What does that say about supporting our local communities? The disconnect between transport and education is hurting our regional students. We need a process that prioritises educational outcomes for all students.

There are more issues like this that I would like to raise, but I do not have time in this grievance to air them. I cannot help but think the review of the transport assistance policy was a way of deflecting from the real issues that were a constant message to the committee at the time. Of course, the member for Mirrabooka was talking to those committees with me so I look forward to her response. We need to stop treating our regional families like second-class citizens.

MS M.J. HAMMAT (Mirrabooka — Parliamentary Secretary) [9.45 am]: I thank the member for Roe for his grievance and confirm that I am responding on behalf of the Minister for Transport who is unable to be here today. The government is proud of its record in transporting regional kids to school. As we all know, one of the things that characterises Western Australia is that it is a vast land mass with a very sparse population. That presents unique challenges in meeting the needs of all people.

As the member noted, I was with him on the Public Accounts Committee that conducted the “bus fair” inquiry, which was initiated by the government as well as the member. We heard a number of stories. The member knows I grew up in the country and relied on a school bus service to take me to school for the majority of my school years, so I understand the issues the member reflected in his grievance.

The state government accepted all the recommendations from the *Bus fair* report in principle, and further work was conducted on a number of matters before the introduction of the updated student transport assistance policy framework in time for the beginning of the 2024 school year. One of the most important recommendations from the review, which the government is very proud to have implemented, is more than doubling the base rate of the conveyance allowance. It is the most significant increase since it was last reviewed in 2002.

The student transport assistance policy provides for a reasonable level of transport assistance to the nearest appropriate government school or non-government school of religious denomination or ethos. Eligible students are either provided access to an “orange” school bus or paid a conveyance allowance to meet the bus en route or to drive to school when there is no service available. School bus contracts are awarded for providing a transport task based on eligibility rules. Irrespective of whether a contract is evergreen or tendered, both contract types have termination clauses for when a service is no longer required. This is usually invoked when student numbers are so low that it makes the contract unviable, or services can be amalgamated to meet the same transport task but with a reduced capacity. The sustainability of School Bus Services is important, and we need to allocate resources in the way that achieves the most benefit.

I come to the particular issues that the member raised. Yuna currently has two services—Yuna north west, which transports seven students, and Yuna south east, which has one student. Owing to the fact that it was only transporting one student, and that patronage is not expected to rise over the coming years, the PTA advised earlier this year that it intended to terminate the Yuna south east service and offer a sizeable conveyance allowance to the family in lieu of the bus.

The student transport assistance policy is designed to provide a reasonable level of transport assistance, and this is applied throughout regional WA, including in circumstances like Yuna. However, in recognition of the strong

community support for the continuation of this service next year, the PTA will maintain this service for one more year. The minister asked me to recognise the member for Geraldton, in particular, who has advocated strongly on behalf of the family and the community to achieve this outcome.

The PTA is currently reviewing the transport requirements for the Darkan community as part of the commitment it gave in responding to the *Bus fair* report. Applications are being processed for the 2025 school year, but based on review outcomes to date, the PTA will be adding a new service for 2025 for the Darkan community to ensure students have access to transport to Collie.

The Public Transport Authority recognises that Kondinin Primary School has been seeking a dedicated bus service for many years, but this has not occurred due in part to the low eligibility numbers and the fact that some Kondinin Primary School students are being transported on the Kulin–Kondinin service. For the one or two students unable to be serviced by the Kulin–Kondinin service, a conveyance allowance was paid to families to transport their children directly to school. However, the school recently approached the PTA after it identified eight eligible students, including some students from the Kulin–Kondinin service. This number of eligible students is sufficient to warrant a service. Based on these numbers and to ensure that the Kulin–Kondinin service remains sustainable, the PTA will initially tender a 12-month contract before a more permanent solution is considered. The PTA advised the principal of Kondinin Primary School of this on 1 November this year.

In Pingelly, the student transport assistance policy provides, as the member has said, a combination of access to a school bus and payment of a conveyance allowance to meet the bus on route, as part of meeting the requirements of route design and the 90-minute travel rule, which I know the member is familiar with. Therefore, some families are required to meet the bus on route. The PTA currently has two services transporting students from Pingelly to Narrogin Senior High School and St Matthew’s School in Narrogin. These routes are the Narrogin–Pingelly service starting at Brookton and the Narrogin–Pingelly number 2 service from Pingelly. Some families were offered a conveyance allowance because the buses would be required to spur off the main route to their residence and this would add considerable travel time to students’ journeys. As the member knows, the 90-minute rule is one of the considerations. The PTA will review these services to determine whether buses can be spurred to the affected families’ residences for the coming 2025 school year. We will review it for the member.

I thank the member for his grievance today and his ongoing advocacy on this issue. Our government is proud of the work that we do to support regional kids to get to school and access the education that they need. As I have already mentioned, our government has delivered significant increases to the conveyance allowance since it was last reviewed in 2002. The government works hard to provide transport arrangements to meet the needs of students right around the state. However, as I have already said, the sustainability of the school bus service is important. It is a challenging task in a vast state with a sparse population. We always need to be mindful of allocating resources in a way that achieves the most benefit overall. I thank the member for his grievance today.

ENERGY — SUPPLY RELIABILITY — KALGOORLIE

Grievance

MS A.E. KENT (Kalgoorlie) [9.52 am]: My grievance this morning is to the Minister for Energy, and I thank the minister for taking the grievance.

Over the years, I have been aware of the impact that changing weather patterns, climate change and the increase of industry requirements have had on the power system in the goldfields. I am concerned, and I know my community is concerned, about power reliability, which is understandable given the outages and the damage to the towers during the storm earlier this year. I know how frustrating and difficult power outages are for businesses and residents and seniors. Kalgoorlie–Boulder and the goldfields are critical to WA’s economy and we want it to have the most reliable power possible. Some of the infrastructure supplying the power to the goldfields is from the 1970s and we have been almost held hostage by the 220-kilovolt line from Collie. Due to its remote location, Kalgoorlie–Boulder relies heavily on stable and continuous power supply solutions, especially for energy-intensive mining operations.

The bulk of Kalgoorlie–Boulder’s electricity comes from the south west interconnected system, which is a major electricity network covering a large portion of Western Australia. The SWIS services over one million residential, commercial and industrial customers. The SWIS is powered by a mix of fossil fuels and renewable sources and serves as the backbone of the region’s electricity infrastructure, transmitting power across long distances to reach remote areas like Kalgoorlie–Boulder. One of the critical challenges in delivering power to the goldfields has been the distance from this major power generation facility and the infrastructure needed to transmit it. There has not been the planning needed to futureproof the power system for Kalgoorlie nor has there been any power planning for backup options. Unlike in the metro area in Perth, Kalgoorlie does not have any alternative paths for power supply. It has only that 220-kilovolt line and the backup generators that the previous Liberal government tried to close down completely. Kalgoorlie–Boulder needs both issues addressed—that is, backup solutions for now and planning for the long term.

For the goldfields mining industry, the adoption of renewable energy and hybrid power systems presents several benefits. Renewable sources can reduce operational costs over time as well as enhance sustainability credentials, which is increasingly important to investors and stakeholders. As energy demands in Kalgoorlie–Boulder grow

with the mining expansion and a rising population, the balance between traditional power sources and renewable options remains vital for the area's future. We know that technological advancements make renewable sources more feasible and cost-effective and Kalgoorlie–Boulder is moving toward a more resilient and sustainable energy infrastructure. We all know that this shift not only supports local industries and economic growth, but also aligns the goldfields with global and national efforts towards reducing environmental impact.

Can the minister outline what the Cook Labor government is doing to meet the long-term needs of the Kalgoorlie region? Acknowledging that these solutions could be years away, what is the Cook Labor government doing right now to ensure that Kalgoorlie–Boulder is as sheltered as much as possible from any outcome of potential power outages? What does the minister know about the difference between what the state government is doing in comparison with what the Liberals are suggesting?

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Energy) [9.56 am]: I thank the member for Kalgoorlie for raising this important matter today. The member and I spent the day together in Kalgoorlie on Friday last week, where I got to hear directly from the people she so fiercely represents. She is a fierce local advocate. I can assure members that she has the Kalgoorlie character of going in all guns blazing when it needs to occur. The people whom she represents are very grateful for her and this government's actions. We saw that with the local community in a shed at a seniors' complex when we met with seniors who were born and bred in the goldfields. They are aged into their 90s. They are real characters who tell us what they think and they were grateful for what we announced that day.

I say "actions", Deputy Speaker, because this government has been taking the reliability needs of Kalgoorlie very seriously. We dedicated serious resources—I cannot underline that enough—across multiple agencies to make effective and lasting improvements now and into the future. The goldfields region and particularly Kalgoorlie contributes so much to Western Australia's economy. There is no doubt about that. I want all Western Australians, wherever they live, to have access to reliable energy. That is why, in Kalgoorlie on Friday, I announced that Western Power has secured an arrangement with TransAlta to provide backup services for the region, which is critical. This arrangement with TransAlta is an effective way of providing significantly more energy security to Kalgoorlie families as we continue to seek additional, permanent backup generation for the goldfields.

As well as TransAlta, I thank BHP for making surplus power from Nickel West available while its operations are temporarily suspended. The additional generation will help bridge the gap between now and when the Cook government secures a commitment for more generation that is expected to be available through the market system from as early as 2026. Again, Western Power is seeking up to 150 megawatts of additional generation, which will directly support power reliability in the goldfields. This is the medium-term solution for this important region. There have been many months getting this arrangement in place and there will be many more months ahead as we look to the future and increasing security for the region.

The member mentioned the approach of the Liberal Party. I do not want to spend a lot of time on that because the Liberal Party has not spent a lot of time on this issue either. We know that if elected, it has committed to negotiate with TransAlta. Guess what? We have already done that. We got it done here and now. The thing is it did not quite understand what it was trying to achieve. It did not understand how it would work, and it certainly did not understand how much it would cost. It just said, "We are going to fix it." Well, it needs to do more. It needs to do its homework, have the relationships and conversations and put measures in place. This government has already done that. Plus, we are looking way beyond where the Liberal Party has even begun to think about the future of long-term security for the goldfields.

I will just recap what we have done since the member has been the member for Kalgoorlie. It is a very short time. This is investment in the Kalgoorlie region alone. This government has spent more than \$130 million in the network around Kalgoorlie. That has been done. Through an arrangement with Synergy to make use of the West Kalgoorlie generators, we have seen significant investment in the control systems, the communications, the black start capability and network settings to make the most of those assets while we need them.

As the member pointed out, the people of Kalgoorlie deserve a long-term solution. We want to move past the 1970s infrastructure solution to a modern decarbonised supply arrangement. That is why when we were in Kalgoorlie last week, we did something else. We brought together industry, government and traditional owners to look at the future and the potential for a privately owned common-use electricity network from Kalgoorlie right up through the north east to Leinster via Leonora. That is game changing for the future of Kalgoorlie. That network could provide the region's households with reliable low emissions energy while decarbonising major mines and industries in the goldfields. That is future-thinking and planning ahead for long-term sustainability to continue to provide power to the goldfields, which is so fundamentally important to the Western Australian economy and for local jobs and opportunities for families in that region.

The Cook government clearly has a vision for Kalgoorlie that will see medium-term security and long-term prosperity. We are securing Kalgoorlie's power supply for today and tomorrow, and we are doing what, quite frankly, should have been done a long time ago. Thought should have been given well over two decades ago about what needed to happen to that 1970s technology. We are doing it now and are getting on with the job. Only a Cook Labor government can be trusted to understand the challenge and do the right thing. I thank the member for her grievance.

PUBLIC HOUSING — DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR — REGIONAL COMMUNITIES*Grievance*

MS M. BEARD (North West Central) [10.02 am]: I rise today to grieve to the Minister for Housing, and I thank the minister for taking my grievance with some notice. I am compelled to voice serious concerns raised by regional communities along with requests for the need to urgently review and reform policy to address disruptive behaviour and property damage occurring in public housing. Ongoing issues related to disruptive behaviour, property damage and deteriorating conditions within public housing in towns across the region, such as Carnarvon, Meekatharra and Mt Magnet, are of concern to me.

I previously raised this issue in this place, but as the minister would be aware the extent and level of frustration within communities was recently also reflected by Mr Newman, the president of the Carnarvon Labor branch, who took to social media to highlight the Department of Communities' failure to manage disruptive tenants effectively and protect private home owners. His statement reflects the community's exasperation with a system that is clearly broken and in desperate need of reform, with seemingly little or no accountability or consequences for offending tenants.

In towns like Carnarvon and Meekatharra, some residents are experiencing severe disruptions to their lives with ongoing unacceptable levels of antisocial behaviour, leaving them unable to live in peace and witnessing damage to properties. Yet seemingly those responsible for these actions are not being held accountable to the level they need to be under current policies and are presumably without relevant consequences.

Mr Newman shared images of property damage that clearly showed the impact of criminal behaviour on both public housing and adjacent private properties. He said that despite documented incidents, this damage apparently does not often meet the department's criteria for disruptive behaviour, leaving home owners vulnerable and disillusioned. This lack of action is eroding the community's faith in the Department of Communities and its ability to uphold safe, respectful and peaceful neighbourhoods. Communities are left questioning why there are no consequences for tenants who inflict damage on public assets and neighbouring properties, particularly when so many families across Western Australia struggle to find a roof over their heads.

The situation in Carnarvon highlights a broader issue affecting regional areas throughout WA. As we all know, property damage and youth crime are an ongoing issue while resources in regional communities have been cut back. Over the past seven years, services, resources and support in many of these areas have been reduced, leaving communities like Carnarvon often without senior managers and a limited capacity to address the complex social issues they face.

The lack of accessible resources, particularly wraparound services, has left the regions feeling abandoned. Wraparound services play a vital role in addressing the root cause of issues like disruptive behaviour, property damage and community safety. As the minister is aware, these services provide a holistic approach by coordinating support from multiple agencies, including mental health, youth outreach, education and employment services to ensure that individuals and families receive comprehensive support.

For regional communities impacted by reduced resources, the absence of a more coordinated approach and support is exacerbating the situation. These services would not only assist in managing behavioural issues but also offer preventive measures, giving at-risk individuals better pathways and potentially reducing the burden on public housing. Greater investment in wraparound services in regional towns like Carnarvon could help transform the community, creating stability and security for both public housing tenants and their neighbours.

It seems evident that a fundamental policy overhaul is needed to restore accountability of tenants within the public housing system to an acceptable level. Many in the region are calling for assistance and an urgent review of the Department of Communities' disruptive behaviour management policy to ensure that tenants who engage in destructive or criminal behaviour face prompt and appropriate consequences. This includes protections for neighbouring home owners who deserve to feel safe and secure in their own properties. I urge the minister to work closely with his colleagues and agencies to invest in additional resources for regional wraparound services.

As the minister is aware, these services are crucial in supporting vulnerable individuals, including youth, and addressing the root causes of these issues rather than leaving communities to bear the brunt of inadequate policy and service provision. Immediate action is essential not only to protect the assets funded by taxpayers but also to rebuild community confidence in our housing system. I implore the minister to listen to the concerns voiced by Carnarvon community members, Mr Newman and many across our regions before increasing levels of anger lead to a desperate situation in which someone makes the wrong choice and take matters into their own hands.

This is in no way about making people homeless. It is about making people more accountable and asking the Department of Communities to take a hard line to ensure the safety, respect and stability that all Western Australians deserve in their housing communities. As one local recently said to me, the standard we set is the standard we walk past. Most real estate agents would struggle to allow this behaviour to continue, so let us lift the expectations.

We all recognise that it is a difficult situation, but it is one we all need to work on together to bring about change and lift expectations while improving people's lives. I look forward to working with the minister to find workable

solutions and a more appropriate level of accountability and relevant consequences for this behaviour along with improving the situation for tenants in need and for communities to enable everyone to live a peaceful life. I thank the minister again for taking my grievance.

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Housing) [10.07 am]: I thank the member for her grievance. I will talk broadly about the midwest and Gascoyne regions. From 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2024, the Department of Communities completed 147 dwellings. Of these, 120 are social housing and 27 are Government Regional Officers' Housing. In addition, as at 30 September, the Department of Communities has an additional 33 dwellings under contract. All of these are social housing, and they include 17 community housing grants. That is important. In addition to the 17 community housing grants, we have a refurbishment program through community housing for 96 dwellings. Contracts have been awarded and of these, 61 have been completed.

First of all, I raise the issue of vacant and boarded properties. I think the member made some reference to these. I note that I received a letter from the president of the Shire of Carnarvon. The Shire of Carnarvon's environmental health officer completed a survey report of unoccupied properties in Carnarvon. I want to put on the record that none of the properties identified in the survey report with severe damage are the responsibility of the Department of Communities. That goes against some of the perceptions that perhaps may be misunderstood in the community. At any one time, 40 properties are undergoing routine vacated maintenance to be returned to service or in the process of being reallocated to tenants. When we have 37 000 social houses, at any one time there will be vacant housing.

As part of our ongoing refurbishment program, the following installations are carried out to help prevent future vandalism and provide protection to tenants. Cyclonic screens are fitted throughout to all windows and doors, including trilocks on all door screens. Fibre cement external cladding is updated to Colorbond sheet metal where necessary. Front boundary fencing and gates are installed, along with metal door lock wraps, to prevent door kick-ins, and deadlock construction. There has been no reduction in housing services in the Department of Communities, as claimed. That is not true. The Department of Communities is working with stakeholders to take precautions to reduce vandalism in both occupied and vacant public housing properties.

In relation to social housing tenancies and management, I need to be very clear that the Department of Communities' disruptive behavioural management policy is the same policy that the last Liberal government put in place. I need to be clear: it is the same policy.

The member referred to criminal matters. Criminal matters do not fall within the jurisdiction of the Department of Communities. They fall within the jurisdiction of local police and any criminal matter should be referred to the police. It is well known that public housing tenants are subject to the Residential Tenancies Act, as are private housing tenants. As the minister, I have no role in the facilitation of evictions. Ultimately, it is a decision of a magistrate, based on the evidence before them, to evict, and that is on the record. We take complaints seriously and they are investigated. But, again, I come back to this fact: Communities is not a law enforcement agency and it does not have the power to investigate suspected illegal activities.

The behaviour we see from the Liberals and Nationals is disappointing. Remember that Hon Steve Martin sat on the committee that conducted the inquiry into the financial administration of homelessness services in Western Australia, which endorsed an approach about the early prevention of homelessness. The Liberals are trying to have it both ways. They signed up to a significant inquiry that recommends early intervention, but now they are using this language that is effectively about eviction. The Liberals forget to acknowledge that ultimately, as the Minister for Homelessness, I will still be responsible for those people. The people who are evicted will end up on the street and then the Liberals will come back and attack us on that, and the cycle will continue.

We fund the Thrive program. We try to provide support to social housing tenants. The majority of social housing tenants live their lives doing the right thing every day, but there are tenants who can have a range of history, issues, life stories and trauma—whatever—and we try to provide support for those tenants.

I am always happy to meet with the member. I have done in the past on a range of issues and I am happy to do so on this issue. We take the management of our social housing seriously. The same policy remains in place but there can be complex issues at hand.

JOINT AUDIT COMMITTEE

First Report — Second review of the operation and effectiveness of the Auditor General Act 2006 — Tabling

MRS L.M. O'MALLEY (Bicton) [10.14 am]: I present for tabling the first report of the Joint Audit Committee, titled *Second review of the operation and effectiveness of the Auditor General Act 2006*.

[See paper [3360](#).]

Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY: The report that I have just tabled advises the house of the outcomes of the Joint Audit Committee's review of the operation and effectiveness of the Auditor General Act 2006, as required under the act. The act requires the committee to appoint a suitably qualified person to conduct a performance and legislative review and to consider and have regard to six prescribed matters. The President of the Legislative Council, on behalf

of the committee, appointed O'Connor Marsden & Associates to conduct a performance and legislative review of the Office of the Auditor General. It found the office to be well functioning and staffed by professional auditors, and made 22 recommendations to improve its functioning further. The Auditor General accepted the recommendations. The committee also reflected on the six prescribed matters and made findings about the operation and effectiveness of the Office of the Auditor General and the act. The committee thanks O'Connor Marsden & Associates and Ms Caroline Spencer, the Auditor General, for their assistance during this review. I commend the report to the house.

CONTROL OF VEHICLES (OFF-ROAD AREAS) AMENDMENT BILL 2024

Second Reading

Resumed from 6 November.

MRS L.M. O'MALLEY (Bicton) [10.16 am]: I rise today to add to the debate on the Control of Vehicles (Off-road Areas) Amendment Bill 2024. In doing so, I will reflect broadly on the themes of safety, protection and enhancement. I will begin my contribution with the three main things this bill will deliver. Firstly, it will remove the requirement for a statutory declaration to be made when registering or renewing the registration of an off-road vehicle, which will enable transactions to be completed online. Secondly, it will introduce the option of registration stickers to be fixed to ORVs as an alternative to registration plates. This option responds to requests from ORV users and advocacy groups. Thirdly, the bill will increase penalties for existing offences such as riding an ORV in a prohibited area, riding dangerously or riding an unregistered vehicle in an ORV area.

Unlike some of the previous speakers on the bill, the electorate of Bicton does not have any ORV areas. That is pretty obvious, but I thought I would make the statement just in case anyone was wondering if, all of a sudden, we were going to have one popping up at Point Walter. Unlike the member for Darling Range, I do not have the history that he does in relation to his motorbike riding exploits as young man and continuously throughout this life. However, I grew up in regional Victoria and was used to off-road vehicles. My family had a farm and although we did not farm on it, it was agisted and we had an adjacent quarry, the stone from which was used for roads, but I digress. We did have a motorbike that I occasionally rode. It had a dodgy clutch, so I did not ride it very often. One of my clear memories of riding it was after Dad had planted a row of eucalypts along the drive. I happened to take a bit of a sharp turn, the clutch failed and I knocked over one of the trees. Those trees are now 30 metres tall but there is a gap where I knocked over the tree.

I go back to the theme of safety. Safety is an incredibly important thing for all of us, and I reflect on the bill that passed this house in relation to our young P-plate drivers. Sadly, like a lot of people who grow up in regional areas, we have lost loved ones and friends in the metropolitan areas too. I do not know the stats off the top of my head, but we know that in country and regional areas, the incidence and impact of road deaths, particularly for young men, is much higher than what we see in the metropolitan area. I experienced those losses as a 17 or 18-year-old, with young fellows in particular—I say young fellows, because in my experience it was—just basically not surviving those risky teenage years. As a mother of a 22-year-old, I also want to put it on the record that yesterday, after two attempts, he passed his driver's test. Yay! I had a conversation with him in the lead-up to his test about the changes we would be implementing in respect of restricting passengers. He was pretty supportive of that and really understood about the distraction of having other young people in a car with the driver. My daughter is on her L-plates and she will be eligible to sit the test in January—same deal.

I have one more story; I am taking a leaf out of the book of the member for Darling Range by reflecting on personal experiences! Fundamentally, this place is about stories, right? It is just that we reflect those stories in the legislation we bring forward, and that is why policy changes are so incredibly important. As an 18-year-old in Victoria, I had just got my licence and I was driving mum and dad's new car, a Fairmont Ghia; we are talking about 1988 or 1989, or thereabouts. The car was full. My younger brother and some of his mates were passengers and we were heading to the closest good pub, in a town called Tarwin Lower, about 45 minutes away on country back roads. Music was blaring and my younger brother was giving directions: "Turn right, turn left". We got to a T-junction and I went straight through the middle, through a farmer's fence and missed a tree, although not by very much. Was I intoxicated? Of course not. I was an inexperienced young driver in a car full of passengers and I felt I did not have the choice to say, "Everyone, turn the music down and shut up. I need to concentrate." We will be making things so much easier for our young people, because they will not have to summon the guts, I suppose, to deal with that sort of peer pressure. That is really good.

To get back to this story, I will share one more personal reflection. I will tell my dad later that I put this in *Hansard*! The local farmer cut the fencing away and we were able to drive home. Dad said something to me that I will never forget. He simply said, "That's the best car I've ever had, and look what you've done to it." That was more punishment than anything.

I return to the legislation. There is a range of off-road vehicles, including dirt bikes, quad bikes, buggies, all-terrain vehicles and other non-road licensed vehicles. To identify the total number of these vehicles across WA would be nearly impossible because there are so many bikes and other vehicles in sheds and garages across our state. These vehicles can be used for a range of purposes. If a vehicle is road registered, it can be driven on public roads

across WA. Although it is possible to keep a vehicle that is unregistered if it is used only on private property, owners should still consider registering their ORVs so that they can be more easily identified and recovered if stolen. An ORV can only be used on private property with the owner's consent.

I have one more story. When I was in year 12 at Leongatha Technical School, I had a good mate who had come down from Melbourne to live in the country. Her father had bought a property, but he went back to Melbourne to work, because back in those days, 17 or 18-year-olds would just live on their own and go to school; we did not think it was unusual. She used to ride her motorbike from the farmhouse up to the bus stop. She could not ride it all the way into town in case she got caught, of course, so she rode to the bus stop. Somebody disabled her motorbike; let us say it was another farmer who was keeping an eye out and thought that that was not the right thing. The bike was unregistered, but it was such an important part of country life, in a way, to get from A to B.

I will again be a bit like the member for Darling Range and skip through the important parts of the bill, because I think we have heard about quite a few of them, but I will talk about why this legislation is important. As members may know, off-road vehicle registration fees are collected in a special purpose account established under the Control of Vehicles (Off-road Areas) Act. Local governments can seek access to those funds to support the establishment and operation of ORV areas. An ORV must be registered to be used in an ORV area. When an owner registers or renews their vehicle, they are investing in the future of ORV areas.

I will pause there and talk about the electorate of Bicton. There are no off-road areas there, but Cockburn is not that far away. In the electorate of Bicton are a lot of people who have retired and moved there from the country, and there are also a lot of people who feel very passionately about the environment and protecting the environment. Those two groups can, and do, work in harmony, but they can also sometimes be a bit in conflict. There are young people who are looking for somewhere to use their off-road vehicles and they are going into unauthorised areas to do so; the member for Cockburn talked about that. That happens in the electorate I represent and in neighbouring electorates. There are clashes of desires and wants. What most people share is a need to get into open bushland areas, away from built-up areas. That is good for mental health, wellbeing and all the rest of it. For some people, that means taking an ORV out and having a bit of a muck around through the bush to get that feeling of being out in the open and a little bit of risk. There is nothing wrong with a bit of risky behaviour, as long as the risk is assessed, particularly for young people. I grew up with four brothers and I have a son, and I understand the risk-taking nature of our young fellows. It is such an important thing, learning to assess risks and learning from mistakes—that kind of thing.

Mrs L.A. Munday: It causes a little bit of pain or not a lot of pain.

Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY: Totally. I think a lot of us, as parents or carers, can see where our kids have not been exposed to risk or have not worked through the processes of risk. There is a lot of talk about resilience. You cannot build resilience if you have not taken some sort of risk and learnt from failure. Obviously, we do not want failures to be catastrophic, but I recognise that some people are going to want to take those sorts of risks with ORVs. It might be jumping on a motorbike and going out through areas of Cockburn or the coastal parts of Freo. But then there are also a lot of people in the community who just want to have a nice walk through native bushland, and if those two activities literally collide, that is clearly not a good thing.

The Control of Vehicles (Off-road Areas) Amendment Bill 2024, which the Minister for Local Government has brought this place, will do a number of things. Yes, I could talk about the technical aspects —

Visitors — Lumen Christi College

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): Member, can I just interrupt you for a minute to welcome to Parliament students from Lumen Christi College in the member for Thornlie's electorate. Sorry, and thank you for that indulgence. Please proceed, member.

Debate Resumed

Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY: That is okay. I am just wondering whether any of them ever jump on motorbikes or have motorbikes. No?

Mr D.T. Punch: I saw a thumbs-up!

Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY: It is good fun, if you can get to do that. Enjoy the rest of your stay!

We have certainly heard about the technical aspects of the bill. I will segue into the establishment of new off-road vehicle areas. I think this is most relevant to the electorate of Bicton and surrounding areas. It will enhance safety for the rider. It will also enhance safety for those who may be in those areas for other activities. It will establish what the areas are designated for, why we have them and where they are. It will also enhance the experience for the rider. We talk about the collection of fees and the funding that can flow through to those ORV areas that are either being established or upgraded to provide an enhanced experience for the rider and also a safer environment.

The third point I want to talk about is the importance of protecting the natural environment and bushlands as best we possibly can, creating and supporting the environment so that those activities can coincide. That is the thing I feel

particularly passionate about. I am pleased that the time it has taken to develop the bill is due in part to the engagement that has been undertaken with those user groups and also the groups that passionately care for the environment in which the ORV areas are established. I thank the Minister for Local Government for doing that and ensuring that that was an important aspect of this bill.

It is important that we have dedicated and well-planned ORV areas, which will help to minimise environmental impacts caused by uncontrolled and unauthorised access to bushland areas. I want to talk about the Cook Labor government's commitment to environmental protection. This is a top priority when considering land use planning. I would like to take a moment to look at the whole-of-government approach to this commitment through *State planning policy 2.8: Bushland policy for the Perth metropolitan region*. The policy deals with two distinct subjects—Bush Forever areas and local bushland. The aim of the policy is to provide an implementation framework that will ensure that bushland protection and management issues in the Perth metropolitan region are appropriately addressed and integrated with broader land use planning and decision-making. This will secure long-term protection of biodiversity and associated environmental values. The policy recognises the protection and management of significant bushland areas as a fundamental consideration in the planning process, while also seeking to integrate and balance wider environmental, social and economic considerations. In general terms, the policy does not prevent development where it is consistent with the policy measures in this policy and other planning and environmental considerations.

The three key objectives of this policy are, first, to establish a conservation system at the regional level through Bush Forever areas and to operate with the clearing controls under the Environmental Protection Act 1986—that is, as far as is achievable, comprehensive, adequate and representative of the ecological communities of the Swan coastal plain portion of the Perth metropolitan area.

[Member's time extended.]

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): I am impressed by the member's breadth of knowledge on these matters.

Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY: Again, as I said earlier, I think I have been inspired by the member for Darling Range's contribution. Sorry, I know I am segueing again, but it is such a delight to hear the contributions of the member for Darling Range.

Mr H.T. Jones: I should speak more often!

Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY: You absolutely should! As I said, this place is about stories. We are telling not just our stories, but the stories of others. We dealt with grievances earlier. They are the stories of the communities we represent, and those stories interact and influence the policies that come from this place. Member, please take the compliment.

The second objective of the policy is to protect and manage significant bushlands that are recommended for protection and management for conservation purposes through a range of implementation mechanisms and as a collective and shared responsibility and general duty of care on the part of government, landowners and the community. The third objective is to provide a policy and implementation framework for significant bushland areas that are recommended for protection and management to assist conservation planning, planning assessment and decision-making processes—this being an important underpinning principle for potential shared-use natural areas.

I return to the bill. The bill will also allow registration stickers to be used instead of registration plates. This is a response to rider advocacy. Stickers may be less likely to be damaged or torn off when riders are racing around ORV areas. It is expected that the option of registration stickers will become available to ORV owners if the bill passes and when the Department of Transport has been able to adjust its internal processes to issue stickers.

I enjoy seeing that a bill has gone through that process of engagement and interaction with the people who will be most affected by the changes. I will conclude with a reflection on the time that it has taken to deliver the bill. It has been some time in the making. I think that given all the considerations—safety of the rider, safety of the community, protection of the natural environment, and enhancement of the rider experience—it is important that it has taken some time to come to this place. Some of these reforms originate from work done in this space under the Gallop and Carpenter governments nearly 20 years ago. A lot of work has been done in the off-road vehicle space over the last two terms of government. Funds from the ORV account have been invested back into ORV areas, including at York, Ledge Point, Lancelin and Pinjar. We talk about coastal ORV areas. Although Bicton does not have any ORV areas, given the location of the electorate along the beautiful Swan River, there is a connection to the concept of erosion damage of sand dunes and how we need to balance many different aspects, particularly in relation to ORV. The bill will create tourism opportunities as well, but we really have to put the environment first because without that there is nothing else.

The Off-Road Vehicles Advisory Committee has been busy working and developing a forward work agenda. Extensive work has been done examining potential new ORV areas. The Cook government recently secured the future of the popular Pinjar ORV area as part of the decision to end pine harvesting in the Gngangara state forest. Work to facilitate the development of Department of Transport systems to allow for online registrations is progressing and work on potential further initiatives in the ORV space remains ongoing. This bill is one major milestone within the broader body of work.

Once again, I thank the minister for bringing the legislation to this place and all members who have contributed to the debate. I commend the bill to the house.

MS H.M. BEAZLEY (Victoria Park — Minister for Local Government) [10.39 am] — in reply: I rise to thank members for their interest in and engagement on the Control of Vehicles (Off-road Areas) Amendment Bill 2024. It is very much appreciated. The bill is an important milestone when it comes to how riding off-road vehicles will be managed and administered in our state and how it can be developed further into the future.

The bill is primarily based around three areas of reform. Firstly, the bill will remove the requirement for a statutory declaration to be made when a person either purchases or re-registers an off-road vehicle. We will bring the registration of ORVs into the twenty-first century by overhauling the current incredibly archaic registration format, which involves a lot of paperwork and is time-consuming for ORV owners. The intent of this piece of the reform is to ease the registration process and reduce the time that it takes in order to increase the number of ORV registrations, because we know that too many people are using unregistered ORVs in ORV areas. We really need ORV owners to register their vehicles in order to ensure that we have a proper understanding of the lay of the land and know how many ORVs and ORV riders there are so that we can service them appropriately with the infrastructure that they need. Also, those registration fees help to maintain and upgrade ORV areas. Registration fees are paid into the account that is used to fund maintenance and upgrades to our ORV areas.

Secondly, the bill will introduce an option to affix a registration sticker rather than hard plates to an ORV. The option of using a sticker is in direct response to requests from ORV users and advocacy groups. It is a great addition in terms of safety—plates can get caught on things such as a rider's clothing—and it will stop people who may not want their registration recorded from easily removing plates to commit an offence.

Thirdly, the bill will increase penalties for existing offences such as riding an ORV in a prohibited area, riding dangerously or riding an unregistered vehicle in an ORV area.

As part of the process of developing this bill over the last 10 months or so, since I stepped into the role, I have been really lucky to go around to as many ORV areas as possible to see firsthand what they look like, how they operate and how they may be improved. I absolutely see the need for more ORV areas throughout our state. They are a massive drawcard. If members were to visit the Pinjar ORV area on a weekend, they would see how busy and popular they are and how much family fun is available to our communities at ORV areas. I have been really privileged to see all the enjoyment that people get from ORV areas.

I was particularly pleased to be a guest of the Shire of York a few months ago to meet with council members, administrators and members of the Recreational Trailbike Riders' Association of WA. They took me through the recent upgrades, which our state government supported, to the Oliver Battista York Motocross Track. It really is evidence of how community groups such as RTRA and local and state governments can work together with a common goal of what can be achieved for the community good. Like I said, I visited Pinjar, Gngangara, Lancelin and Medina ORV areas. During those visits I met with local governments and stakeholders to discuss the opportunities to protect and expand gazetted ORV areas across the state and what local governments may need in order to fulfil their obligations to administer ORV areas and make sure riders and users follow the legislation.

Through those visits I identified the need for new areas and upgrades. I was very pleased to have the support of RTRA and local governments when I recently announced a \$4.8 million injection into the ORV account in order to run a new grants program. In my knowledge of this space, it is the single biggest injection of funds for ORV areas and the ORV riding community. I hope that is the case, and I look forward to delivering major upgrades to and new ORV areas across the state. I will say that applications for that grant program close on 8 November, so I look forward to seeing what local governments in conjunction with community groups in their area have put forward.

In terms of the legislation and the funding boost, I am really pleased that it is about not only improving, upgrading and creating more ORV spaces, but also the flow-on effect of boosting local businesses and tradespeople. Applicants for the grants are being encouraged to use local suppliers for their projects. Quite a bit of work is involved in creating an ORV area. It needs to be designed properly to make sure that it meets the needs of all the different types of users, and there are many different types of off-road vehicles.

I would also like to acknowledge the contributions of members who spoke to this bill. I heard the member for Collie–Preston first. I thank the member for her contribution and acknowledge her part in Collie's incredibly successful transition to achieve trail town status. It is a prime example of what can be achieved when mining and industrial land is converted into land that is used for recreational purposes. I know that the member for Collie–Preston is a big proponent of improving land around Collie for recreational use. The member mentioned in her contribution comments made by Mr Ryan May on the historical lack of government support for dedicated off-road vehicle areas. I am sure that Mr May's views—I have heard them too—are shared by many people.

I also reflect on the comments made by member for Hillarys. It is abundantly clear to our government that there is significant demand for places to ride off-road vehicles, and that is exactly what we are trying to provide through the grants program. Like I said, I look forward to those applications being realised.

I also acknowledge and echo the member for Collie–Preston’s sentiments in regard to the passing of former Shire of Collie councillor Elysia Harverson due to breast cancer. I acknowledge the fact that she very sadly left behind her husband and two young children. This news was incredibly heartbreaking and I wish nothing but the best for the family. I note, because of the insidious nature of breast cancer, the member for Darling Range also had a connection through ORVs with someone with breast cancer. It goes to show how insidious that disease is. The member for Darling Range mentioned Jess Price, the wife of X Trial champion Neil Price. I was lucky to meet them both recently, as the member for Darling Range pointed out. I want to give a shout-out to Jess and wish her all the very best on her breast cancer journey. I am very pleased that she is NEDs—no evidence of disease. I had not heard that phrase before but it is one that I will absolutely remember because it contains the best news.

I would also like to thank the member for Hillarys for her contribution on the bill. She made some great comments around the responsibility of government to combat dangerous off-road vehicle activity. It is a responsibility that this government takes seriously and it is why this bill will increase penalties for illegal and dangerous riding. It is just one strategy our government is implementing as part of a broader plan. It would be foolhardy if we simply increased penalties for riders who do the wrong thing without providing greater opportunities for riders who do the right thing, which is the vast majority of riders. Like I said, that is what we plan to deliver through our grants program.

The member alluded to the Pinjar off-road vehicle area, which is close to her electorate. I am sure she has many constituents who take full advantage of that ORV area. If members have never been to and want to see a great ORV area—they might not be a motorcyclist but have a keen interest—they should visit Pinjar because it is a great example of a successful and family friendly off-road vehicle precinct. The member also made note of environmentally sensitive areas such as Pinnaroo Valley Memorial Park, and the importance of keeping riders out of such areas. Those comments were echoed by the member for Bicton. In Western Australia we have a beautiful natural environment that is second to none in the world, but because of that, it can also be a pretty precarious environment at times. We have a lot of endangered flora and fauna throughout Western Australia. The uniqueness of our environment is something that we are very proud of and something that we work very, very hard to protect, which is why we want to see less illegal off-road vehicle riding. Often those riders do not know that they are doing significant damage, so we need to provide them with areas where they can ride safely, both for themselves and for our beautiful environment.

I acknowledge the member for Cockburn’s contribution and his extraordinary ability to weave his contribution into another area that I am passionate about—AUKUS and our defence industry workforce. I give a massive shout-out to the member for Cockburn and his ability to do that. I will also point out, in respect of this legislation, that the member for Cockburn particularly mentioned the penalties that currently apply. He has dealt with constituents who have rightly complained about the excessive noise generated by off-road vehicles using non-off-road vehicle areas. That is creating real social issues in respect of people’s quiet enjoyment of their homes. He noted that the current monetary penalties of fines between \$100 to \$500 no longer have the same deterrent impact as they did when they were first legislated back in 1978. I am really pleased that the member pointed that out in respect of the new penalties under this bill. They will be much more of a deterrent against illegal riding of ORVs. I think the member for Cockburn and the constituents he referred to will be happy about that, and I hope the member will have time to relay to those constituents, when this bill, hopefully, passes both houses and is enacted, that the new penalties will be available to authorised persons. The bill will also make a difference to people living in areas adjacent to places where illegal off-road vehicle use is prevalent. I hope that that will be the case when the legislation is enacted.

A lot has been spoken about penalties and illegal off-road vehicle riding, but I want to point out that the vast majority of off-road vehicle riders are legitimate. It is mostly a family pursuit, from what I have seen. It is wonderfully enjoyable, and it is a very legitimate recreational pursuit. We need to give people the opportunity to pursue that recreation lawfully, and we will be able to through the creation of more off-road vehicle areas. Again, that is what our \$4.8 million grants program is all about.

I briefly mentioned the member for Darling Range earlier. I would like to thank him for his contribution to the second reading debate and for his support for the bill. It was great to hear about the member’s personal connection with off-road vehicle riding; he may have the strongest connection to ORVs of anyone in this place, although he may be in competition with Hon Kyle McGinn in the other place. Between the two of them, we have both houses well covered! I am not sure whether to be disappointed or relieved to hear that the member has hung up his helmet, but I am sure his back will thank him for that decision! It was also wonderful to hear the member make mention of his local clubs, including the Lightweight Motorcycle Club, and encouraging off-road vehicle riders, particularly motorcyclists and young motorcyclists, to join that club and have that community around them.

I also want to thank the member for Darling Range for bringing up the important issue of safety and the appropriate use of ORVs. The development of ORV sites is critical to improving safety, as is the upgrading of current sites. I have seen at first hand the need for upgrades to some of our ORV areas, and I am confident that many of those upgrades will come about through the grants program and will result in both better enjoyment of those areas and improvements in ORV user safety. He pointed out that his electorate is within an easy drive of the Perth metropolitan area, where the majority of the state’s population lives, and has a number of potential ORV areas. I am very

hopeful that some of his local governments will partner with groups like the Lightweight Motorcycle Club or the Recreational Trailbike Riders' Association and put in grants submissions. If not, I look forward to working with the member's local governments in future to see what is possible for them.

I also thank the final contributor, the member for Bicton, and congratulate her son on finally getting his driver's licence. I believe it was third time lucky; the third time is the charm, as always. It took me three times to get into this place, so I vouch for the number three! The members for Bicton and Darling Range rightly made the point about safety, not just on our roads but also in our off-road vehicle areas. That is absolutely paramount. I have spoken to stakeholders, primarily the local governments that will be the administrators of this legislation, and I can say that safety is number one for them, as is the mitigation and management of risk in ORV areas. It is an inherently risky recreational pastime, so it is pleasing for me to know that local governments and their authorised officers, including rangers and what-have-you, have safety at front of mind. That is certainly the first topic that mayors and rangers alike bring up with me in respect of administering off-road vehicle areas. I was also very pleased to hear the member for Bicton and other members talk about dedicated ORV areas in order to protect our sensitive environment around WA. Increasing the deterrents is also central to our efforts to try to minimise illegal ORV use.

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his remarks on and support of this bill. I am very glad to know that this bill has support on both sides of this chamber. I am sure we will deal with most of his points during consideration in detail, but I will touch on a couple that we are probably not likely to get to. One is the issue of electric bikes. Just to clarify, I understand that electric bikes may fall under the definition of eRideables, which may be regulated under different road traffic laws if they are used in public spaces. The current act defines an ORV as "a vehicle which is not licensed, deemed to be licensed, or the subject of a permit granted, under the *Road Traffic (Vehicles) Act 2012*". This bill will not change that definition.

The Leader of the Opposition also raised the issue of the revenue collected from registration and asked about collections at point of sale of a new ORV. I would certainly like to see that in place. The current act already puts the onus on the owner of the ORV to register the ORV if they are going to ride it in a gazetted area. As the Leader of the Opposition would know, some ORV owners purchase those vehicles with the intention of using them only on their own land. Under those circumstances, they do not need to register their ORV. It is the same as a farmer buying a car that will be used only on their farm; they do not need to register that car. There is nothing in the bill that will specifically prevent point-of-sale registration. Like I said, I absolutely encourage that. By removing the paper statutory declaration requirement, we will remove a barrier to point-of-sale registration. I am certainly committed to delivering online registration for owners as a first priority, once this bill, hopefully, passes both houses. I will say that the relevant department, the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, is also working with the Department of Transport to provide supporting materials to dealers to encourage buyers to register the ORV before it leaves the dealership, and we are also very open to considering the option for future online registration by dealers on behalf of owners.

This bill has been made possible through the work of some very dedicated people, and I name and thank some of them today. I thank the dedicated members of the Control of Vehicles (Off-road Areas) Act Advisory Committee, who continue to work to support the future of ORV riding throughout our state. I personally thank all the committee members and their deputies, including Mr Aaron Cook, Mr Rick Gill, Ms Jan Court, Mr Graham Cawley, Mr Michael Emery and Ms Kirsten Stender. This bill has also been developed through the advocacy of riders, including the members of the Recreational Trailbike Riders' Association. The RTRA has been very active and involved over several years. I acknowledge Don Martin and Ryan May, who are very passionate advocates for off-road motor sport.

Mr D.A. Templeman: They are.

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: They are indeed! Other members know of their passionate advocacy, not just me. I also acknowledge my colleague in the other place whom I have already mentioned, Hon Kyle McGinn, for his incredible work around motor sports. Indeed, it was Hon Kyle McGinn who made some very important and valuable introductions for me in that space. I also acknowledge my staff, including my incredibly dedicated chief of staff, Rachel Sackville-Minchin; my fantastic former senior policy adviser, Sam McLeod, who recently joined my colleague's office and has been the biggest champion of this bill and driver of our initiatives in the ORV space; and my new adviser, Ron Sao, for his work to continue these important reforms.

This bill is an important milestone. It is a milestone in many years of work by the staff of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, including Troy Hancock, Ethan Redshaw and Narrell Lethorn. Lastly, I acknowledge the dedicated people in local government who are absolutely critical in developing and administering high quality off-road vehicle areas. This bill is another step in our government's support of responsible off-road vehicle riding in Western Australia. Thank you to all those people.

I commend this bill to the house.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave denied to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

*Consideration in Detail***Clause 1: Short title —**

Mr R.S. LOVE: This is the Control of Vehicles (Off-road Areas) Amendment Bill 2024, and I refer to the “off-road areas” aspect of that. There are seven gazetted off-road areas on the department’s website, I think—Gnangara, Pinjar, Lancelin, Ledge Point, Kwinana, York and Karratha—and a map that indicates that Cervantes and Jurien Bay have permitted sites, but I do not know that those sites are gazetted. Can the minister confirm which areas in the state are gazetted off-road areas?

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: I will go through the gazetted sites. They are the Lancelin sand dunes; the Pinjar site, which is on Orchid Road in Nowergup; Gnangara, which is the ORV area near Gnangara Road; the York site, which was mentioned earlier; the Medina site; and the Ledge Point site in the Shire of Gingin. The site in Keralup is not yet gazetted.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I am asking about the map that apparently indicates that Cervantes and Jurien Bay have sites that are permitted. What is the difference between permitted and gazetted sites?

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: There are gazetted and permitted areas. Many areas that are permitted are gazetted; others are permitted without being gazetted, because they are permitted under a local government’s local laws. An ORV can also be ridden on private land with the landowner’s consent, and any other ORV use that is permitted under their local property laws. I also point out that the areas in which the Control of Vehicles (Off-road Areas) Act applies, including areas permitted for or prohibited from use as ORV areas, have been varied from time to time by notice in the *Government Gazette*. All non-gazetted permitted ORV areas are within areas of the state in which the Governor has declared the ORV act applies.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Who bears the legal responsibility if there is an accident on a site in an area that is permitted or gazetted? Is it the state government or the local government? Have any payments been made for injuries that have been sustained at any of the sites?

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: I do not have information on any payments for injuries as that is not directly related to the bill. If the member wants to put in a query to my office, I would be happy to follow that up for him. In terms of liability, this is definitely a question that comes up for local governments. A local government may have obligations under the Civil Liability Act 2002 or the Occupiers’ Liability Act 1985, as well as duty of care requirements under common law principles of negligence arising from their ORV act responsibilities. Depending on the circumstances, duty of care measures that could be required of local governments could include signage, management, inspection and maintenance of ORV areas. Generally, the local government is not responsible for any injuries, accidents or deaths that occur at a permitted use ORV area. Reasons for this include the fact that ORV activities have an inherent risk. Private ORV parks are required to have their own public liability and indemnity insurances. Injuries, accidents and deaths that occur on privately owned property such as farms are treated in the same way as any other injury, accident or death and are not given consideration under the ORV act.

Clause put and passed.**Clause 2: Commencement —**

Mr R.S. LOVE: This clause states that sections 1 and 2 commence on the day of royal assent. Sections 3 and a list of other provisions through to sections 14 and 15 commence on the day after assent day. Those are the penalty sections within the act that will immediately change. The rest of the act will commence on a day fixed by proclamation. I assume that will be subject to and dependent upon there being some regulations that will be gazetted. When is that expected to occur?

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: The member is correct. The reforms to penalties in the act will take effect immediately following assent. The online option to renew off-road vehicle registration will be available to riders in the coming months. The entire registration scheme will be fully online in 2025. Minor amendments to regulations will need to occur, which will be in the months following the successful passage of the bill.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The penalties will increase. Where will the penalties go when paid? Will they be kept as consolidated revenue or go into the off-road vehicle account? Is there a plan to use those penalties to improve the off-road vehicle bank account?

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: All fines under the bill will go to either the consolidated revenue if issued by a state party—for instance, the officer of a state government agency such as the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions—or it goes into the relevant local government’s consolidated revenue if it is the local government’s officer issuing the offence and penalty.

Clause put and passed.**Clause 3 put and passed.**

Clause 4: Section 28A amended —

Mr R.S. LOVE: This clause will remove the requirement for a statutory declaration and therefore will develop an online process for handling the registrations. I have two questions on that. Will the registrations continue to fall on a certain anniversary? How far advanced is the process of developing the online system?

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: Yes. That September date, which is a sort of anniversary cycle of registrations and re-registrations, will continue. Work is currently underway to transform the registration system to be completely online. There was a workaround for this current year's registration in which drivers were able to submit paperwork by email and complete the rest of the registration via phone, which meant that they did not have to go into the Department of Transport directly. That work is underway. It relies on the passage of this bill. My plan is to have that go live by end of the first quarter next year.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Will the registration information feed into what is known as the National Exchange of Vehicle and Driver Information System—NEVDIS—database?

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: The intent is that the database will be connected to NEVDIS.

Mr R.S. LOVE: With the change to a label instead of a plate, will the existing registered vehicles be sent a label or do drivers need to apply for one? What will be the process? Will they have to go to a licensing centre to access them?

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: The details of issuing labels or plates will be dealt with in the regulations, but it will remain an ongoing option to choose between either a sticker or a metal plate. In terms of accessing either of those registration systems, that will again go through regulations.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Whilst the regulations around those are being drafted, what consultation will occur as to physical things such as where it will be displayed and its shape and size and the like? I know for instance that the WA Rangers Association has the view that it will be more difficult to see a label somewhere because it may be obscured by someone's leg or that it might be difficult to pick up the label as opposed to a plate, which is much more prominent. Will such organisations be consulted as well as off-road vehicle users?

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: Even in my anecdotal conversations with both riders and industry, there are pros and cons with both of those. The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries has already consulted and worked with the Department of Transport to develop the relevant amendments here in this clause. Going forward, DLGSC is preparing to communicate the details of the regulations to all local governments. It will use the off-road vehicle committee, which has close links with industry representatives such as the Recreational Trailbike Riders' Association, to communicate the reform to users. I am sure that if the consultation process identifies that further consultation is required, that will happen.

Clause put and passed.**Clause 5: Section 29A amended —**

Mr R.S. LOVE: This clause deals with moving to an online system in the sense that the person can fill out an approved form that will be available online. When there are transfers, which are dealt with in clause 5, what will be the situation with labels? Will a fresh label be sent out for the new holder of the registration?

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: Sorry, can I just clarify? Is the member asking about a current off-road vehicle owner who has a plate and whether they will be automatically sent a sticker when they re-register? Is that what the member is querying?

Mr R.S. LOVE: No. This is about transfers. As I understand it, the clause here deals with transfers. Hang on; I am trying to find it.

Clause 5(2) will amend the method of notification from writing to the approved form for the ORV owner notifying the director general of an ORV transfer. When the transfer takes place, will there be a requirement to send out a fresh label? I imagine that labels will need to be periodically changed either annually or some other way. For a boat registration, for instance, someone gets a fresh label every year. I assume that this will be a similar situation. What will happen with the transfer of the licence?

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: This is a very valid question, but it is an operational matter. It will also be dealt with in regulations. I am sure that the clarity around issues such as that will come through in consultation as well.

Mr R.S. LOVE: What if the person no longer wishes to register their vehicle? Do they need to return the label or scrape it off? What will the situation be there?

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: I anticipate that it will be the same as the requirement to return plates at the moment. When a licence is not renewed, there is currently a requirement to return the plates associated with that registration for the ORV. The same will apply for the sticker.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 6: Section 31 amended —

Mr R.S. LOVE: As I understand it, clause 6 accounts for the return of a registration plate upon a failed payment. In terms of the payments that will be made under the new system, will money physically change hands at the moment, or will there be a cheque or money order? I think there was a situation in which the department overcharged a number of people, and it sent money back. Out of interest, because it mentions payment, where is that process at? I have received correspondence from people who say that they have been sent a request for an electronic funds transfer et cetera. Can the minister explain where that is at?

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: The government acknowledges that riders were incorrectly charged an amount that did not align with the fee prescribed under the ORV regulations. We have undergone a process of identifying those ORV registrants. The discrepancy occurred due to a miscommunication between two government agencies in relaying the timing of the proposed fee for the increased ORV registrations. Each of those registrations and registrants have been contacted in order to try to make that refund as seamless as possible. We offered the EFT refund system. Many of those refunds have been administered and the DoT website itself has been updated and the fee amended back to \$35, effective as of 12 August. All those refunds have been progressing at pace. I do not have the exact numbers, but it is certainly an active project that is ongoing. From a verbal update I have received previously, I believe that the majority have been dealt with.

Clause put and passed.**Clause 7: Section 34 amended —**

Mr R.S. LOVE: Clause 7 deals with plates. The minister outlined that she has no detail about matters to do with labels or plates at this stage and that it will be dealt with in regulations. The penalty in clause 7(2) is a fine of \$5 000, and there are other \$5 000 and similar amount fines in other provisions. Can the minister explain how the \$5 000 was arrived at?

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: There was a review of the offences and penalties undertaken alongside the Road Traffic Act and the Road Traffic Code. That was carried out by Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries. This resulted in keeping a tiered approach to penalties depending on their seriousness, but all penalties were generally lifted to a maximum of \$5 000. Modified penalties will still apply at 10 per cent of the penalty amount, which is within the maximum limits set under the Criminal Procedure Act 2004.

Clause put and passed.**Clauses 8 to 12 put and passed.****Clause 13: Section 50 inserted —**

Mr R.S. LOVE: This clause will insert section 50, “Transitional provision for Control of Vehicles (Off-road Areas) Amendment Act 2024”. Can the minister explain how that will operate for a start and what the anticipated transition period might be?

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: The timeframe is dependent on the implementation of regulations. The insertions in this clause will allow ORV owners who gave notice in writing before the amendments commence to be exempt from the new requirement to give notice in the approved form for ORV transfers. It is unlikely that many riders will be affected during this relatively small transitional phase when the new process for ORV transfers commences. It simply means that an ORV transfer that is in process at the time of new provisions taking effect will be bound by the previous transfer requirements only.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Sorry; I missed whether the minister said how long she thinks it may take to make its way through.

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: The timeframe will be dependent on the implementation of the regulations. I also point out that this simply deals with off-road vehicle transfers that are being processed at the time that the new provisions take effect. It just means that they will be bound by the previous transfer requirements only.

Clause put and passed.**Clause 14: Various penalties amended —**

Mr R.S. LOVE: Clause 14 sets out a table of penalties. We have already discussed how the government arrived at those penalties. Under the current act, there is considerable variation in the penalties for various offences. A maximum amount can be imposed by, I take it, going through some sort of court process. We discussed that the modified penalty is 10 per cent of that amount. Can the minister explain the operation, in practice, of these penalties in the context of off-road vehicle areas in which there are often many different combinations of ownership of vehicles, riders of vehicles and commercial operators? I am thinking about Lancelin and the 200 000 people who ride there each year. How will officers keep track of who is responsible in those circumstances in order to mete out a fine? Is there a list of officers who can carry out the fines and the like? How does that operate in practice?

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: Various officers are authorised to enforce the ORV act. They include local government officers, all police officers and officers of various public authorities, such as the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions and Fisheries, if those officers from public authorities are approved by the Minister

for Local Government. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned Lancelin. I know that that area is heavily patrolled by local government rangers. In Lancelin, I suspect that the vast majority of authorised persons who administer fines will be the rangers. I also envision the possibility of other authorised persons coming into that space if necessary, and that would predominantly be police officers.

Mr R.S. LOVE: A lot of different offences are laid out here, but there is one in particular that I will refer to. Can the minister give me any guidance on section 6(4), which will now have a penalty of \$5 000 or a modified penalty of \$500. Subsection (4) is all about noise. People used to have to provide a statutory declaration that their vehicle was not too noisy, but that provision is being done away with. Is it still appropriate to have this section 6(4) penalty given that noise is a subjective measure or is some level of noise actually defined as being problematic?

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: That used to be signed off, in agreement, through a statutory declaration. As the approved form comes into being, it will be dealt with in the same way. Under the act, a person must not use or drive an off-road vehicle on any private land in a manner that creates or causes any undue or excessive noise. The prescribed noise and safety requirements will be set out in the regulations.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The penalty under section 9, “Dangerous vehicles not to be driven etc.”, will also increase; it will go up tenfold. Does the definition of a dangerous vehicle pertain just to the safety of the operator or does it encompass a vehicle that is potentially a fire risk?

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: Sorry, member; did you refer to a vehicle that is potentially a fire risk?

Mr R.S. Love: Yes.

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: So it is not just about the safety of the riders?

Mr R.S. Love: What constitutes a dangerous vehicle?

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: The member is correct in that section 9 deals with all sorts of safety requirements, including the need to fit seatbelts where appropriate. Under section 9, a person must not drive a vehicle on land to which the ORV act applies if the vehicle is constructed in a way that is likely to cause danger to any person or to property. That is a way of dealing with the Leader of the Opposition’s query. I have just double-checked section 9 and it states —

A person shall not drive or use on any land to which this Act applies any vehicle so constructed or in such a condition as to be likely to occasion danger to any person or damage to any property.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I have a couple of other questions about safety. Section 9C(1) is a safety requirement around the wearing of helmets, seatbelts etc. Why is there no provision for all children to wear a helmet? I think that provision applies to children from six years of age and I am not aware of any provision for children under that age. Is that the case; and, if so, why is that the situation?

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: Section 9C(1) outlines that a driver of an ORV and their passengers shall wear a helmet, as it applies to a motorcycle. In terms of the age limit, a person shall not knowingly permit a person under the age of eight to drive an ORV, other than on private land or by consent. In terms of ORV areas, to be compliant with the act, riders have to be aged eight years and above.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Section 10 outlines the minimum age for drivers. The Recreational Trailbike Riders’ Association of WA believes that the minimum age requirement should be looked at. It would like the minimum age changed to four years, as children can compete and participate in controlled or sanctioned events from that age. That would then enable them to begin to develop their skills by working under supervision. Can the minister give me a response to that request from the RTRA?

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: We are open to ensuring that all passengers of ORVs are required to wear a helmet, but the minimum age for persons to drive an off-road vehicle has not been considered as part of this bill. The government also intends to review the regulations so that the prescribed safety standards will reflect the current safety standards. The current wording around “helmet” does not mean that all helmets are noncompliant with the Control of Vehicles (Off-road Areas) Act.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 15 put and passed.

Title —

Mr R.S. LOVE: The minister mentioned that she wanted to see this legislation enacted so that the next payment period could encompass the changes. Where does this bill sit in the order of priorities in the other house? As I understand it, the government has provided the opposition with a list of bills. Is this one of the bills that is expected to pass in this Parliament or is it one that the government has not prioritised for the remainder of the session in the Legislative Council?

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: I cannot comment on that. The upper house is responsible for its own agenda and priorities.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Has the minister not had any contact through the leader in the other place about the priority of this bill?

Point of Order

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: I do not think that this conversation is speaking to the question that this be the long title of the bill. The member's questions should be about the long title of the bill, not about the government's agenda.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.A. Munday): There is no point of order, member for Cockburn. However, this is not particularly relevant to the long title of the bill so if we can move on to closing, that would be great, Leader of the Opposition.

Debate Resumed

Title put and passed.

[Leave granted to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Third Reading

MS H.M. BEAZLEY (Victoria Park — Minister for Local Government) [11.42 am]: I move —

That the bill be now read a third time.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [11.42 am]: I would like to wind up by thanking the advisers for their support for the minister and for providing the minister with the background and answers that I sought. I have put on the record our support for the Control of Vehicles (Off-road Areas) Amendment Bill 2024 on behalf of the opposition. I do not know whether it will progress through this Parliament. We know that a lot of legislation has been read in of late. A list of bills was agreed to in the other place, as I understand it, after some discussion. I hope this is one of those bills because I have been personally advocating for these changes for some years, as have other members of the chamber. We would like to think that this bill would sail through, but it will do so only if it is brought on for discussion by the government, which controls the agenda and the business of the other place. With that, I will wind up and commend the bill to the house.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

RESERVES BILL 2024*Second Reading*

Resumed from 8 August.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Thornlie) [11.45 am]: I am very pleased to rise to speak on the Reserves Bill 2024. I begin by noting that it will be quite possibly my final contribution to a second reading debate in this Parliament. It is quite a fitting one for me to end on because I think that reserves, conservation areas, national parks or whatever name people want to apply to them are an incredibly important part of any state, nation or jurisdiction. They are an indicator of how we are looking after the land that we are fortunate enough to call our home.

The International Union for Conservation and Nature recommends that 30 per cent of a nation's bioregions be a protected area. The government's Plan for Our Parks initiative in this bill is the delivery of the Cook government's very important step forward in the expansion of our conservation estate. It is a government commitment to add an additional five million hectares of land to Western Australia's conservation estate. That is an absolutely remarkable and excellent thing to be doing. It edges us closer to that 30 per cent recommendation. There are, of course, some biogeographic regions, which we refer to in Australia as interim biogeographic regions—IBRAs—that already are edging up to 30 per cent, and some have even exceeded it. I will go into the history of national parks in a moment.

Recently, there has been a tendency to add to the conservation estate land that was not suitable for agriculture and no-one else wanted. In the nineteenth century, there was international recognition of the importance of protecting areas of every country. With United States matters being present in our minds given the events of the last 24 hours, it is worth noting that the US was one of the first countries to create a national park, which was Yellowstone National Park in 1872. That was in the aftermath of the American Civil War when there was a need for a national focus on something. Ulysses S. Grant was the President and he saw it as a great way of defining American exceptionalism and greatness through the creation of Yellowstone National Park. That is one of the first national parks that was ever created. In Australia, it was not until 1879 that a national park was created just south of Sydney, known as the National Park at the time. It has since become known as the Royal National Park. That change to the park's name came about in 1954 when Queen Elizabeth II was visiting. Those were the days when people like Robert Menzies would see the Queen and say things like, "I did but see her passing by. And yet I love her till I die." It was that sort of forelock-tugging obsequiousness that we had around the Royal Family—and, sadly, still do in some quarters—that changed the name of Sydney's National Park to the Royal National Park. The point here is that the National Park had been created before.

John Forrest National Park was Western Australia's first national park. It was created in 1898 and named after Sir John Forrest. It was originally called Greenmount National Park and the name was changed to John Forrest

National Park in 1947. This history of protected areas is something that is in our blood—something that we do get. It is something that is seen as important for our sense of who we are as a people. Fortunately, in the time I have been in this Parliament I have seen an incredibly strong bipartisan and tripartite support for the notion of recognising traditional owners in the management and ownership of those national parks. It would be fair to say that it was not at the forefront of people's minds in the nineteenth century that there be recognition of the traditional owners; however, we turned that around. I will go into this a little more: the creation of national parks and protected areas in whatever form is very much done with the consent, interest, engagement, commitment, enthusiasm and passion of traditional owners. It is a very positive step.

I touched on John Forrest National Park. It is near to us here and is a wonderful place to visit. It is some 2 700 hectares—not a huge national park. It is a good example of the various types of use that come from a national park. Of course, there is the biodiversity conservation element, but there is also a significant frequentation of the national park that is purely for recreational use by people who perhaps do not necessarily initially understand or appreciate the ecology of the scarp. They do not necessarily appreciate the flora and fauna of the national park, but by visiting it, they are on that journey of appreciation. They can see what a jarrah tree should look like and what a jarrah forest ecosystem should look like. They can get a sense of how at certain times of the year the forest will have a completely different aspect to another time; different wildflowers will be present and different fauna activity will be going on. That is all part of the learning journey. I am very supportive of enabling people to have access to those protected areas.

Within the conservation estate in Western Australia certain lands are designated as conservation areas that are perhaps so fragile that they are better off not allowing heavy frequentation of people. However, for the most part the national parks in Western Australia are robust enough and sufficiently well managed enough that we can allow that frequentation to take place and we can allow people to be active participants in the life of the national park. Of course, that means that a management plan must be in place. There is always a significant backlog at the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions in the preparation of management plans for national parks and other protected areas, but that is very important work and it needs to be done thoroughly. It is all part of ensuring that the interests of different communities and stakeholders are involved.

I touched on the United States situation because of recent events. I will put on the record that personally I am utterly bereft, I think would be the word, at the decision of the American people. It is very disappointing, but I have sought solace in the idea of who those Presidents were who created the national parks of the United States and the fact that it is seen as a major economic contributor in the US to have protected areas and reserves. I have some statistics from the National Park Service, which interestingly was a beneficiary of the previous Trump administration's legislation called the Great American Outdoors Act. It was one of the few acts that went through in the Trump administration that had genuine bipartisan support. It was all about improving the infrastructure in national parks so that it was a better experience and there were better facilities for people, and better management of visitors to national parks in the US. Current statistics are that 330 million people visit those US parks each year, generating \$40 billion worth of economic activity and 340 000 jobs. Whatever the Americans' political leanings, they realise the enormous value of those protected areas.

There has been talk about various US Presidents. Prior to Trump, Grover Cleveland was the only other President to have lost an election and then won again. He was the President who signed orders to improve the level of protection of Yellowstone National Park. It is important to note that this is not something that just Democrats do. In fact, in many ways American people consider Republican Teddy Roosevelt, President from 1901 to 1909, one of the definitive conservation Presidents. I like to think that tradition could continue, but that remains to be seen. It has to be said that in other areas, the attitude of President-elect Trump to matters environmental and conservation is nothing short of depressing. That is an important thing for the American people to work on to ensure that any egregious actions are avoided.

I return to matters Western Australian and the incredible rollout of our conservation estate—the eventual delivery of the gold standard of 30 per cent of each ecosystem-type or IBRA region being a protected area. That is very important because if we achieve that 30 per cent, the science is that we will then be able to maintain the level of species diversity, the genetic diversity, that we need to have a good, healthy, self-sustaining set of elements within that bioregion. It is very important that that science is respected. That is overlaid with various activities. I am sure I am not alone as a member who has visited the Ningaloo coastal reserves and has seen the pressure that comes from visitation there, but has also been able to appreciate and enjoy the benefits of the good management, whether it is the careful use of spotter planes to help boats find a whale shark and enable people to swim with a whale shark—an amazing experience—or whether it is about the guided tours that enable people to safely see parts of the Cape Range National Park. There are magnificent opportunities for us to see. It all takes good management, but it adds to the sense of appreciation.

I go further north to the Buccaneer Archipelago and the expansion of that marine park there. This has been done with very careful liaison with the traditional owners. In fact, it is true to say that the protected status of that area has been co-designed by the state government and traditional owners. There is 600 000 hectares of marine park

there. It is an outstanding addition and an amazing achievement to have that added to our conservation estate. There are many other areas, as well. I want to highlight the expanded Wellington National Park, which is down near Collie. We made a commitment that we took to the 2017 election to expand Wellington National Park in recognition of the visitation levels that were already there. This additional 25 000 hectares will enable an even greater appreciation and greater recreational use of the area. I refer to the evolution of Collie—I am sure that the member for Collie–Preston will perhaps be keen to talk about this further—and the idea of Collie being a trail town and offering all sorts of quality trail experiences for mountain biking and walking, such as the Munda Biddi Trail and the Bibbulmun Track—all these amazing recreational active adventure tourism opportunities that enrich our economy and make us fitter, healthier and more connected with our natural environment. They are incredibly important and valuable.

I want to touch on the reinstatement of Lake Jasper in the D’Entrecasteaux National Park area in the Warren–Blackwood electorate. That area is magnificent. In 1996, 360 hectares of land was removed from the national park to facilitate mining, but with the withdrawal of the mining lease it has been possible to add back to the conservation estate this incredibly important biodiversity hotspot that is actually home to more than 25 species of waterbird and provides nursery habitat for endangered freshwater fish and frogs. These are some of the additions we are making to the conservation estate, and they are all great achievements. I really commend the minister, the government as a whole and especially the public servants—those working at the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions—for their hard work. Sometimes they come up against campaigns, and I know that this has happened with the south coast marine park.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: They often come up against raucous, ill-informed campaigns, and people do not seem to learn from other cases. Earlier, I touched on the example of the Ningaloo Marine Park and the fact that 30 per cent of its waters is a no-take zone. When the Gallop government put that forward, the recreational fishers in the area thought that this was going to be the end of the world. Now, we find that, if anything, fishing has improved in the area. The 30 per cent no-take zone is not a problem; it actually enriches the overall experience of everyone there. I believe the same can be said for the south coast marine park, as well. If we have something approaching this gold standard of 30 per cent protection —

Mr P.J. Rundle: It wasn’t gold-standard consultation!

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: It is funny that the member for Roe should say that. I would like to know when he first embarked on consultation around the south coast marine park. When did he first hear about its proposal?

Mr P.J. Rundle: When did I first hear about it?

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Yes.

Mr P.J. Rundle: A very ordinary couple of public consultation processes —

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Just give me a rough year.

Mr P.J. Rundle: — by DBCA et cetera.

A government member: When?

Mr P.J. Rundle: About a year and a half, two years ago.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Member for Roe, that project has been talked about going way back to my days at the Conservation Council of Western Australia. Enormous consultation went on then. I remember going down to Esperance and talking to all sorts of people about it then. The member for Roe’s constituents have been working on this for years, so the fact that he is a Johnny-come-lately who has got around to hearing about this only in the last couple of years just shows exactly the standard of the debate and discussion. I find it really offensive when people say, “We’ve not been consulted on this.” That whole project has been consulted on for years—the protection of the magnificent Recherche Archipelago and all the magnificence of the south coast. The member is not prepared to be involved. The fact is he is working with a cohort of people who do not want any level of protection, because they have not actually bothered to look at, say, Ningaloo, where 30 per cent of the area is under strict no-take protection levels, and see the benefits of that. How can this be? People are not learning from other examples within the same state. It is hard to understand why we are not able to learn from what has been achieved elsewhere.

I want to touch finally on an area that I think is dear to us all, and that is the Swan and Canning River area. It is the protected area that is really under the most pressure in Western Australia, because it is at the centre of the Perth metropolitan area. It is, of course, a magnificent asset for our city. It is a beautiful feature. It is the thing that people always talk about when they visit Perth from interstate or overseas—they always mention the magnificence of the Swan and Canning Rivers. It is a defining feature. But as it is at the centre of our urban city lifestyle and our development here—it is at the very heart of it all—it is subject to incredible pressures. Over the years, there has been

great focus on the water quality that was causing all sorts of problems such as algal blooms, the amount of erosion or the build-up of toxins in the waterway and things like that. We have been able to improve those problem areas through a succession of carefully documented programs such as the *Swan Canning River protection strategy*. We have been able to make progress, and that is a really good thing.

Currently, the river protection strategy is under renewal—I have spoken to the minister about this—and we had a public consultation on the draft PS. We also conducted a survey at the beginning of the year on the RPS, which had around 1 200 responses. I note that the public consultation on the draft RPS had just 40 submissions. I think that something might be a bit amiss there, because that is only three per cent of the number of people who responded to the survey. Clearly, we have work to do to make sure that the new river protection strategy meets the challenges and that it is multidisciplinary and multi-agency and not just something that is left to the DBCA. The DBCA does not have the capacity to manage all the pressures that surround the Swan and Canning Rivers system; it needs to be a multi-agency effort.

There is one indicator I am particularly keen to see in the river protection strategy. Yes, it should have those indicators of water quality and other species and diversity around the river, but I think an absolutely key indicator for the river protection strategy is the number of bird entanglements. If there is a sign of us not managing the interplay of people and river, I think it would be the number of bird entanglements. I am connected with the Western Australia Seabird Rescue Group. It is constantly being called out to rescue pelicans, darters, cormorants, you name it—all kinds of birds that have the Swan–Canning river system as their home. People from WA Seabird Rescue are being called out and asked to try to rescue the birds when they have fishhooks in their mouths and around their necks, wings and feet. That has come about because of poor recreational fishing practices in which people cast off and catch birds on their hooks. It is invariably a lethal encounter. I think that is a poor reflection of how we are interacting with the river. That is why I am very keen to see bird entanglements as a key performance indicator in the next iteration of the river protection strategy so that we can work out policies that make people more informed and careful recreational fishers, so that they do not cast off when there are birds nearby and are aware of the consequences, if they do hook up a bird, of cutting the line and letting it go to a cruel death.

We need to ensure that management is part of the Swan–Canning river system, just as we do with any of our reserves to varying degrees. Those that are surrounded by people, like the Swan–Canning river system, are under incredible pressure; hence we need greater effort when it comes to the management of the people who interact with that particular reserve system. I am very pleased to be part of a government that has strongly delivered on its rollout of the Plan for Our Parks initiative. An additional 5 million hectares is a great achievement. It is something that will put us right up there on the global stage as people who believe, understand, appreciate and, indeed, profit from having a protected area network. It is for us to enjoy and showcase as a lasting legacy of how we will live our lives in 2024–2025—in as full a way as possible, that is not to the detriment of the other aspects of our Western Australian heritage, and that we protect our natural environment and Indigenous heritage, treasure it and recognise it for its uniqueness. That is what the Reserves Bill 2024 will help us deliver and I commend it to the house.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [12.13 pm]: I am the lead speaker for the opposition on the Reserves Bill 2024. Member for Thornlie, I think it is in fact 2024, according to what I have in front of me. Regardless, I am the lead speaker for the opposition, and I am pleased to report —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs M.R. Marshall): Members!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: — that the opposition will be supporting this bill, members for Bassendean and Bayswater. It is important today for me to take this opportunity. The member for Thornlie pointed out a few things about conservation efforts and the like. I want to rebut a few of his comments about the south coast marine park. He may say that consultation has been going on for a long time and that may well be correct. But I have been the member for Roe for seven and a half years, and I have never seen a more controversial lack of consultation in my time. I want to take this opportunity today to talk a little bit about that.

We are talking about reserves. The member for Thornlie talked about the fantastic government commitment to create five million hectares of land and sea parks. That is fine. That was the government's commitment at the election. However, it cannot just run roughshod over communities to implement its wishes. It actually needs to consult properly. Over the last couple of years, we have had a very poor consultation process. As the member for Roe in the new Liberal–National government in 2025 —

Mr D.J. Kelly: You'll be Premier. I'd vote for that.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Good to hear. I support the comments made by Hon Neil Thomson about that. We need to have a review of the scenario that has happened with the south coast marine park. As far as I am concerned, I would like to take it further and have a review of the consultation process and the performance of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions and the like. I would also like a review of the submission process. We know that there were 22 000 submissions. The minister said that a majority were in favour. I want to know how

many of those were pro forma submissions in favour from the likes of the Pew Charitable Trusts—a favourite of this government behind the scenes. It is a \$7 billion outfit from Washington and Boston that cannot seem to have much effect in the United States but has come over here to try to implement its thoughts on the people of Esperance and the south coast. That is what I will be looking to do in the new Liberal–National government after March 2025.

The other thing I want to do as part of that review is look at the way the minister and his departments have consulted—or not consulted—with fishing families on a transition assistance program. We have not heard too much about that. For the businesses of Esperance that will be affected, what will be the community benefit? These are the questions that I will look to get answered in the review. We have seen many of those fishing families come out in the media and say, “The minister came to town. The only way we found out about it was through the media. We had our fishing management meeting for the south coast over two days. It was very convenient that the minister came into town when we weren’t available to consult with him.” These are the questions that I will look to have answered.

Obviously, we will be supporting the Reserves Bill 2024. One of the main reserves mentioned is timber reserve 160/25 in the Shire of Wandering, which will be converted into a class A conservation park located about 15 kilometres north-east of Boddington. Timber reserve 160/25 will comprise a portion of a larger conservation park proposed in successive forest management plans. It is probably one of the larger ones in amongst this bill. I certainly go through the likes of Dryandra Woodland when I drive from my Narrogin electorate office on the way to Wandering, when I cut through Bannister through to Perth. That particular Dryandra forest is a very important one on the edge of my electorate. I understand the conservation significance of that.

During debate on the bill relating to forestry, the Conservation and Land Management Amendment Bill 2024, I questioned Minister Whitby, who had carriage of that bill. I still have concerns about the way the government has pushed on with its plans to cull forestry in Western Australia, and the contraventions that occur. Scenarios have occurred in which timber milling families that have been in the industry for over 100 years have had the rug pulled out from underneath them. I still remember sitting in this chamber on the day former Premier McGowan announced the end of native forest logging. Those involved in the forestry industry were in a state of shock. They could not believe it. Once again, there was no consultation; instead, the government catered to the voters of Fremantle and the inner-city suburbs of Perth. Do not worry about the families of regional WA! Then the former Minister for Forestry tried to tempt Parkside Timber to come across to WA, with the government spending \$50 million.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs M.R. Marshall): Members!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Two or three years later it was a case of “See you later”, with the government spending \$50 million and pulling the rug out from under Parkside.

Regional people are getting upset because there has been no proper consultation. We are seeing it now with the logging of jarrah and clearing that is occurring due to bauxite mining. I was talking to someone the other day about the Forest Products Commission stockpiling jarrah timber and the like. Furniture makers and others would readily use the timber. Instead, it is being stockpiled and then, all of a sudden, we have the scenario of those logs salvaged from the mine site going in a furnace because the government has a state agreement obliging it to supply logs to produce charcoal for the production of silicon. Why are our valuable jarrah logs being used to produce materials such as charcoal? Seriously! I would like the Minister for Forestry to look at that. The person I spoke to the other day was quite dismayed by that.

It is quite disturbing to see what happened after the ban on native forest logging in WA was imposed. Let us look at the scenario relating to Carnarvon’s timber jetty. Minister MacTiernan finally committed to reinstating part of the Carnarvon jetty. A tender was put out. What happened? No jarrah or other timber was available in Western Australia to repair Carnarvon’s timber jetty. What did we have to do? We had to source logs from Indonesia. It is the old story from this Labor government—not in my backyard. There will be no forestry here in Western Australia but, by the way, we can import timber from Indonesia or South America, as long as it does not come from our backyard. The same thing occurred in the live export industry. It is no good in Western Australia, which has the best live export standards in the world. We will happily let South Sudan and other countries put livestock on the ship and count off whatever is left at the other end—so, not in my backyard.

It is important that the Minister for Forestry takes a good hard look at the situation relating to jarrah. Burning good jarrah for charcoal does not make sense. I ask the government to please take that on board. It should have a good hard look at the whole scenario relating to forestry clearing for bauxite mining. It is quite challenging. I know that forests also have to be cleared for the development of the mineral sands industry. It is quite a juggle for the government. The government pulling the rug out from under the timber industry without consultation did not make sense.

During my contribution to debate on the end of native forest logging, I said that after receiving \$350 million from the state government, the Forest Products Commission can now go out with its large chequebook and buy up good farming land. We see that occurring in places such as Darkan and other high rainfall areas. Our farmers who want to buy up that good agricultural land are now competing against the Forest Products Commission, which has

a \$350 million chequebook. These are the types of things that create dismay for regional families. They cannot see why we are not only losing good agricultural land, but also getting swamped with wind turbines and the like. We have challenges. Transmission lines and all the other things will destroy good quality agricultural land. This government needs to take that on board. Consultation needs to be done properly.

The people of Esperance are horrified by what has happened. The minister can stand in this place and say that it has been great and that the government has done a good job. A few people have made comments on Facebook and elsewhere. I was at the Esperance Show for two solid days. I can assure members that a line-up of people wanted to talk to me about their opposition to the South Coast Marine Park. A group opposing the South Coast Marine Park had set up a tent around the corner. It was just as busy as I was. I have been out on the ground. I spoke to everyone at the Esperance Show who came past. I can assure the government that those people are not happy. We need to look at the transition package and we need to support our businesses and our fishing families. We cannot just dish it off to the Minister for Fisheries and hope that something might happen in the next year or two. This government really needs to focus, consult properly and ensure that it is looking after the interests of regional families.

I return to the Reserves Bill 2024. As I said, I am happy enough with the 3 200-hectare class A reserve in the Shire of Wandering. Having looked at the second reading speech and the explanatory memorandum, I noticed that a lot of the scenarios relate to tidying up reserves and working with local governments. The land changes are modest, allowing for good housekeeping of Western Australia's land estate. Sometimes sensible changes need to be made. The shadow Minister for Lands in the other place, Hon Steve Martin, has contacted several of the shires responsible for the reserves named in the bill. In general, the broad position is that they are generally happy with, or certainly not opposed to, the proposed transfer of management of various reserves. I will not spend time going through each reserve; the terms are well laid out in the explanatory memorandum. Basically, amendments will be made to 10 class A reserves and seven other reserves across WA. Putting them all together obviously expedites parliamentary business. On the advice and recommendation of Hon Steve Martin, on behalf of the opposition, I support the bill.

MR T.J. HEALY (Southern River — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.29 pm]: I rise to make a contribution to the Reserves Bill 2024. I appreciate the opportunity. I will speak to a couple of points today—firstly, the importance of parks and reserves. By way of background, I live next to an amazing park. I live in what I call “old” Gosnells. There is a very large and beautiful park a few doors down from my house that my family and I enjoy. It is right by the Canning and Southern Rivers. If the ferry allowed me to come here, I would use it, but the Southern River is very small. We can canoe on it in winter, but it is not as strong as it used to be. I live next to a beautiful piece of Southern River and Canning River. I recently purchased some bikes. This summer will be our first with a family set of bikes and we look forward to enjoying the reserves through that section. I grew up in Wilson and Thornlie, all along the Canning and Southern Rivers. I got to explore that beautiful area—bushwalking, canoeing. I look forward to my daughters and I enjoying that.

I commend my council. Whilst they have closed the short bridge that connects my house across the Canning and Southern Rivers, they are upgrading it. I look forward to being part of the opening of that bridge very soon. It is a beautiful timber bridge and it will be open for the community. I disclose that I love parks and reserves. I have been in Cubs, Scouts, Venturers and Rovers for the last 30 years. I obtained my world conservation badge in each of those sections and have always enjoyed the outdoors and allowing the community to enjoy reserves. My daughters are now invested into Cubs and Joeys and I am very excited that they will get to continue that. At Cubs the other night, they were beginning the construction of canoes for Cubtiki. It allows the community to enjoy the Canning and Southern Rivers in a competitive way.

I again express how much I appreciate my local area. I am very happy today to see that we have some schools visiting. I acknowledge Lumen Christi College, which is a school I share with the member for Thornlie. The former member for Southern River, Paul Andrews, used to teach there. It has three school groups visiting today and I am sure they will also enjoy the opportunities to enjoy their reserves and parks. St Norbert College is also here. As a former student of Ursula Frayne College, there is a bit of rivalry with St Norbert's but I welcome them here today.

This bill allows for a number of things. I acknowledge the Plan for Our Parks initiative, which is a core part of the bill. It is one of the largest and most comprehensive expansion programs in the state's history. It allows more parks and reserves to be recognised. There are parts that will be excised as part of the multiple sections in terms of the Reserves Bill that is here today—I will talk about that. Overall, this government has a commitment to add millions of hectares of land and sea to Western Australia's conservation estate over many years. I am proud to be part of a government that has proposed and is implementing that plan. I acknowledge the multiple ministers and their teams who have put in a great deal of effort, legislative and parliamentary time and work, as well as intensive, far-reaching and well-regarded public consultation as we have moved through promotion and consultation plans. I appreciate that we are doing more in terms of those reserves and that we are engaging well with the traditional owners of those lands.

I will go through my experiences of a couple of reserves and parks. I would like to talk about one aspect of this, being the south west and the native forests. The Dwellingup state forest is part of one of the new reserves, the

south west native forest in Wandering Conservation Park. For many years I would go to the Nanga Bush Camp. I spent a lot of my youth as a participant and then a leader on the Nanga Salesian youth camps. The Dwellingup state forest is a beautiful area. The Nanga Bush Camp is not necessarily within that, but the area for bushwalking, canoeing and activities is such a jewel for residents of the metropolitan area to be able to travel not too far to be part of a really beautiful reserve. I acknowledge that.

I will talk a little bit about the forest management plan and this government's work, before my time, in terms of the Gallop government and what it began for the protection of the south west native forests. For those playing at home, from 2001 it was part of the Gallop–Carpenter Labor government's moves to protect old-growth forests. There was a historic move in 2021 by this government, which I am very proud to be a part of, to end large-scale commercial logging under the *Forest management plan 2024–2033*. Western Australia is one of the first places to end commercial logging of native forests. It will protect several million hectares of native karri, jarrah and wandoo forests. It will allow us to protect south west native forests and they will be managed for their health and resilience. It allows existing reserve proposals from the forest management plans to be progressed and, again, other hectares of jarrah, karri and wandoo forests. The Minister for Forestry was in Gosnells last week for a community breakfast and a number of issues were acknowledged and discussed. Furniture producers and members of the community were there. I re-emphasise that the new forest management plan allows ecological thinning for forest health. I appreciate that that allows a local source of wood under ecological thinning. I appreciate that the Minister for Forestry came to my community and spoke very well. I acknowledge previous forestry ministers in the room and the great work that is being done in that space.

I am on record as saying that I am very interested in my electorate, but I consider the whole state to be part of my electorate. Members of my community leave my electorate to go to work and play and enjoy the state. I believe that I am connected via the Canning and Southern Rivers to those reserves that these bills are connected to. Because the Canning and Southern Rivers connect to the Swan, I argue that it connects to the ocean and therefore the entire electorate of Western Australia is considered part of my electorate, even though only 30 000 of those constituents are eligible to vote for me.

I refer to a couple of reserves in clause 9. I acknowledge that there will be excisions as a result of the bill, but I would like to refer to reserves 49363 and 49636, along the Canning River. I already mentioned where I grew up. Mum's house is in Wilson and Granny's house was in Thornlie. We spent a lot of time growing up across a number of the reserves along the Canning and Southern Rivers. The bill specifically refers to areas within the City of Canning around the areas of Ferndale and Wilson. I have many years of wonderful experiences canoeing up and down that river to Riverton Forum and back, trudging along beautiful bits of canoe area and the Kent Street Weir. The area has some absolutely amazing sections.

Again, I acknowledge that one great benefit of the south east corridor is that such beautiful areas of pristine land and reserves are still available for families to enjoy. One can follow the river past Carousel, Cannington, Ferndale, Hester Park and into Langford through Thornlie to Gosnells to Southern River. Families can enjoy some absolutely amazing spaces. I look forward to ensuring that members of my community keep enjoying those spaces.

Clause 9(1) also refers to reserve 49220, comprising some sections of Woodman Point. I spent many school camps there. Being a teacher at Southern River College, we would often have our school camps at that reserve and the section along the ocean. I have been to many excursions. When I was a Rover Scout, the 2014 Rover moot was based there. Again, these are beautiful facilities that the community can access and enjoy.

Clause 9(2) refers to reserve 16245, which is in Koorda. I have some wonderful friends and family who live in Koorda. I have enjoyed the space and the beautiful areas there. It is a beautiful section of land and a beautiful community. Reserve 8482 relates to the Leeuwin–Naturaliste National Park. My family has had the opportunity of holidaying there and enjoying that space and bushwalking. It is an absolutely wonderful space.

I want to draw back to other reserves within my electorate. I am very lucky to have a number of Bush Forever areas. Bush Forever areas are sometimes a bit contentious. They are not available for residential use or for building. I believe in the 1980s and 1990s, the area started to be divided up and transferred from farm and bushlands into residential and non-residential areas, and a lot of the Bush Forever areas were designated at that point. A large number of areas of very beautiful sections of pristine bushland remain available in urban growth areas not very far from people's houses, although the community cannot necessarily go into them because they are protected.

Barrett Street is probably the first that I will speak to families about. Members would be aware that the state government, with the federal government and the local council, has recently provided funds to build the footpath—the long-awaited Terry Healy footpath—through the existing old-style road of Barrett Street. I can report that the footpath is 95 per cent completed. There is a small section of footpath to go. The road itself has been sealed. We were recently in contact with Western Power, and the streetlighting is coming. Some paint, road marking and chicanes are still to come. Either side of Barrett Street remains as Bush Forever land. This is an existing old-style road that goes through the middle of that land. It is a very important access way. It allows us to enjoy that space and allows families to drive through and be a part of that. That Bush Forever land and that space is very important.

I will report before we get into members' statements. A final section of footpath remains to be completed. The council was a bit late putting in clearing permits for the areas that are adjacent—not in the Bush Forever land, but in the road reserve that is managed by the council—but we expect that will happen very soon. Members can be sure that I will be happy to make some very important statements when that Barrett Street footpath is completed.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

QUEENSLAND ELECTION — LIBERAL NATIONAL PARTY

Statement by Member for Cottesloe

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe) [12.45 pm]: Today I am pleased to offer a heartfelt congratulations to the Liberal National Party in Queensland and its leader, David Crisafulli, for its landslide victory in the recent Queensland state election. The LNP took Queensland by storm with a solid six per cent swing, capturing a clear majority across the whole state with a likely 53 seats in its 93-seat Parliament. The predicted result shows the LNP winning an additional 19 seats and the Labor Party losing 17 seats. The result ended the nine-year tenure of the previous Labor government. Clearly, the people of Queensland were ready for change. They demanded real action on the issues that matter to ordinary people, like tackling crime, reining in the cost of living, making housing affordable and strengthening health care—all issues on which Labor in Queensland had failed. These are not just Queensland issues. There is an uncanny parallel between the failures of the Labor Party in Queensland and those we see in our own state. The public in Western Australia will have their opportunity to judge the current Labor government in March 2025.

I am proud to sit beside the Leader of the Liberal Party, who shares many of the characteristics of the new Premier in Queensland—sincere, hardworking and focused on the issues that really matter to Western Australians. This sits in stark contrast to WA Labor, for which spin and bluster are a substitute for real performance. The collapse of support for Labor in Queensland parallels the collapse in support for the federal Labor Party. The winds of change are blowing, and they are heading west. A new light is dawning, Madam Speaker, a new light on the hill, and I am ready to see it shine in WA next year. Congratulations again to the Queensland Liberal National Party. I look forward to a similar result in Western Australia next year.

Thank you.

CAROL HANLON — WOMAN OF THE DECADE AWARD

Statement by Member for Belmont

MS C.M. ROWE (Belmont) [12.47 pm]: I rise today to acknowledge a very important member of our community. Carol Hanlon is a highly regarded and insightful business leader whom I have had the privilege of knowing for many years. She has dedicated most of her professional career to helping small business owners. She founded the not-for-profit Belmont Business Enterprise Centre in 1994. As a former board member of the BEC, I saw firsthand the invaluable work that Carol and her tireless team of staff and volunteers do on a daily basis. The BEC, now in its thirtieth year, provides small business training and mentoring programs and services and has assisted over 35 000 individuals across Australia and overseas. Through the BEC, Carol runs a plethora of programs and events, including Ask an Expert business sundowners, Designedge Innovation festivals, Multicultural Business Support Services, the WA Racing Industry Development Project, the Belmont Clothes Library, the MY Business Incubator Cyber Security Project and of course the Belmont Small Business Awards, which held its thirty-first awards this year. I was recently delighted to be involved as a co-MC alongside the delightful Louise Percy again. This is a great opportunity to celebrate the success of our WA small business community.

I would also like to acknowledge the Count Me In disability employment awareness program run through the BEC to 3 000 business participants across the state. Carol also runs the hugely successful Textile, Clothing and Footwear Resource Centre of WA, which is known as a global expert in this field. I want to acknowledge that she was recently awarded Woman of the Decade at the World Women Economic Forum on 21 September in Melbourne, Australia. I wish to extend my heartfelt congratulations for this prestigious award, which is thoroughly deserved. Congratulations, Carol Hanlon.

GEOGRAPHE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHAPLAIN — TREVOR ADAMS

Statement by Member for Vasse

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [12.49 pm]: Recently retired Trevor Adams, a support and guidance school chaplain, has had a huge impact on the students and wider school community. His shoes will be hard to fill. Trevor left the police force to become a volunteer mentor for students, which ultimately led him to his chaplaincy journey with Geographe Primary School for the past nine and a half years. His mantra is, "If you want respect, you give respect." That seemed to be the motivation for everything he did. Trevor had the inspiration to establish a Friday lunchtime campfire. Students found themselves drawn to the opportunity to sit and reflect on what was going on with them. It provided a safe, supportive and friendly setting, and also attracted students from the ed support centre, who often struggled in their mainstream setting. Trevor also ran the breakfast club three mornings a week with the assistance of the local Coles store and the second bike program. He organised food parcels

for families in need of assistance and focused his energies on disengaged kids with his support and understanding. Trevor made a real difference to children who had experienced trauma or who were marginalised by fostering an environment in which they felt safe, valued and understood, according to associate principal, Alison Freeman, in her farewell speech to Trevor.

Trevor, your work is a testament to the work of power, empathy, faith and care. Thank you for your incredible efforts on behalf of the Geographe Primary School community and the broader community for the support and inspiration that you have provided to the broader school community in Busselton.

MULLALOO SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Statement by Member for Hillarys

MS C.M. COLLINS (Hillarys) [12.51 pm]: I would like to recognise the outstanding work of the Mullaloo Surf Life Saving Club, a premier club that achieves excellence at both the state and national level. As vice-patron, I am immensely proud to support this iconic club that has safeguarded our northern coastline for over 50 years. The fact that zero lives have been lost on patrol speaks to the dedication of the surf lifesavers who keep our communities safe. I take this opportunity to thank all members who volunteer their time and service to our community. Over the years, Mullaloo Surf Life Saving Club has expanded its facilities to keep up with its growing membership, which is now over 2 200 strong. However, increased demand calls for smarter facility use and expanded storage for lifesaving equipment, along with improved spaces to support programs for active, healthy lifestyles and community inclusivity. The addition of jet ski and drone patrols as well as an expanding nippers program has underscored the club's need for more infrastructure. To meet these demands, the committee has developed a strategic plan to upgrade the facilities, including more storage for inclusion resources such as access mats and wheelchairs, a larger gym to support the growing membership and a new kitchen to support events and fundraising efforts.

These upgrades will make the clubrooms a more modern and high-value venue for community hire, setting up the club for independent funding well into the future. As the member for Hillarys, I am committed to supporting this fantastic club and will advocate for these well-deserved upgrades. I am honoured to support the Mullaloo Surf Life Saving Club and its ongoing journey. I am confident that this incredible club will continue its legacy of service for generations to come.

KALGOORLIE — NATIONALS WA CANDIDATE

Statement by Member for Moore

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [12.53 pm]: I rise today to speak about the electorate of Kalgoorlie and how it will soon have a dedicated strong voice in Tony Herron, the Nationals WA candidate for Kalgoorlie. Tony Herron is a passionate local champion for the people of the goldfields. I am confident that he will be a powerful representative in state Parliament. With a background as an underground miner and now as a local operations manager in the resources sector, Tony has a deep knowledge of one of Western Australia's most critical industries. He understands the unique challenges and opportunities facing the region and is committed to working alongside the Nationals WA to drive a prosperous future for Kalgoorlie and the wider goldfields. Having called the goldfields home for over 20 years, Tony is eager to give back to his community. He recently told the *Kalgoorlie Miner* —

“I love this place. I've married here, brought up a family here, and I want others to be able to experience that as well,” ...

It is a fabulous community, and we're looking to make it stronger.”

It is inspiring to see a candidate engaged with local issues like Tony Herron. He is tackling the concerns of Kalgoorlie head-on, from power reliability and antisocial behaviour to the shortage of skilled workers. They are all issues that have worsened under WA Labor's watch in Kalgoorlie. Beyond his professional achievements, Tony serves as deputy president of the Sporting Shooters Association of Western Australia, advocating for the sporting and recreational firearms community and understanding the social and economic contributions the group makes. The people of Kalgoorlie–Boulder and the goldfields will be represented by Tony Herron. I look forward to welcoming Tony to Parliament next year.

GIRRAWHEEN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL — FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Statement by Member for Mirrabooka

MS M.J. HAMMAT (Mirrabooka — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.54 pm]: Great things are happening at Girrawheen Senior High School. This year the school is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary. It celebrated the occasion with a festival on its school oval earlier this year. The school had another celebration just last week to open the time capsule that was buried on its twenty-fifth anniversary, and to bury a new collection of memorabilia marking the fiftieth anniversary. When it dug up the 25-year anniversary time capsule last week, it learnt to its great surprise that the contents were no longer there! There was a carefully buried canister, but nothing inside it. This has resulted in a great mystery. If anyone knows what happened to the contents that were buried 25 years ago, we would all like to know.

The celebration also coincided with the school's students winning the Western Australian Solar Car Challenge for an incredible fourth consecutive year. The first-placed car was crafted by students Jun Guo and Minh Lai. Another team secured third place for their car, built by students Mathias Creemers, Liam Rowe, Hong Thuy Cuc, Reda Ramlan and Fiat Po. Good luck to the students who have now been invited to compete in Sydney at the national final in December.

I also want to give a special shout-out to the STEM club coordinator at the school, Charan Pabla, who oversaw the teams and was awarded the WA Premier's Secondary Teacher of the Year at the 2021 WA Education Awards.

All this success and much, much more underlines the incredible teaching and learning that is occurring at Girrawheen Senior High School. This was also recognised when the school was the winner of the Award for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at the WA Education Awards in 2022. I thank the school leaders Barbara Newton, Dee Karmen and Anna Italiano and all the other staff and board members for their leadership and all that they do for our young people. Congratulations on the school's fiftieth anniversary. The future looks incredibly bright.

NUNGARIN HERITAGE MACHINERY AND ARMY MUSEUM — THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Statement by Member for Central Wheatbelt

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt) [12.56 pm]: The Nungarin Heritage Machinery and Army Museum is located in the small wheatbelt town of Nungarin, a three-hour drive east of Perth. The museum is housed in an original army vehicle workshop building, which was constructed by the Australian Army from 1942 to 1943 as part of Australia's defence during World War II. The huge building was part of the No 5 Base Ordnance Depot Precinct that was considered to be the largest storage facility for army ordnance in Western Australia. After the war, most of the camp facilities and buildings in Nungarin were sold. The Shire of Nungarin purchased the army vehicle workshop for use as the shire depot. In October 1994, the Nungarin Heritage Machinery and Army Museum opened and initially shared the army vehicle workshop with the Shire of Nungarin. This was until 2016 when a new purpose-built shire depot was built and the museum was then able to occupy the entire army vehicle workshop.

The museum has a number of wonderful displays of military memorabilia including the 10th Australian Light Horse Regiment collection and a Borneo exhibition displaying the Sandakan death march. Other items on display include a rare Dingo scout car, a Stuart tank, a Bren gun carrier, examples of military uniforms, army vehicles and trucks, and many photos from World War II. There is a wide array of agricultural machinery displaying the changes in technology since beginning of agricultural development in Nungarin in 1909 with the civil servants resettlement scheme. On 2 November 2024, the museum committee, volunteers, the Nungarin community and visitors celebrated the museum's thirtieth birthday. This was a momentous occasion for a small and dedicated group of volunteers, whose vision is to continue to display their heritage. I congratulate the president of the museum, Gary Coumbes, and his marvellous group of volunteers. It has been a pleasure to support them in my time as the member for Central Wheatbelt and I know that Lachlan Hunter, our candidate for Central Wheatbelt, was delighted to join them on the weekend to celebrate the museum's thirtieth anniversary.

STEPHANIE LE LIEVRE — TEACHING FELLOW

Statement by Member for Darling Range

MR H.T. JONES (Darling Range) [12.58 pm]: I rise to highlight the achievements of Stephanie Le Lievre, the principal of Serpentine Primary School, and her recognition as a teaching fellow. Stephanie is one of 22 inspiring educators across Australia that were recognised at the 2024 Commonwealth Bank Teaching Awards at Parliament House in Canberra on 9 September 2024. Stephanie has led the development of a comprehensive reading framework, including detailed scope and sequences, English block structures and knowledge unit breakdowns. She also led the creation of the widely acclaimed *Serpentine Primary School: Instructional playbook 2022*, which has been extensively downloaded and served as a model for other schools. By focusing staff meetings and professional learning opportunities, she has equipped teachers with essential skills resulting in significant growth in literacy levels across her school and marked improvements in NAPLAN results in 2024. Stephanie's commitment to advancing teaching practices is evident through her leadership in the Reading Science in Schools group and the Syntax Project, both nationally recognised for their contributions to education.

As principal of a Fogarty EDvance mentor school and a frequent presenter at numerous conferences, Stephanie demonstrates high-impact instruction to educators worldwide. Her leadership prioritises a high-support, high-expectation culture for her staff in which teacher wellbeing is emphasised through genuine systems and practices that reduce workload and foster professional growth. Her team's curriculum work has been recognised by the Grattan Institute for both reducing teacher workload and improving student outcomes. On 30 October, the director general of the Department of Education, Mr Jim Bell, and I visited Serpentine Primary School to see it in action in light of Stephanie's award. We were also pleased to meet with deputy principal Zoi Nixon, school board chair Kelly Baldacchino, and other teaching staff, all outstanding contributors to their school. Families in Serpentine can be assured that their children have access to the best education possible. Well done to Stephanie and all staff and volunteers for their dedication to students in Serpentine.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm

**VISITORS — TERRESA LYNES,
LAKE GWELUP PRIMARY SCHOOL AND ST NORBERT COLLEGE**

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.00 pm]: On behalf of the member for Scarborough, I would like to acknowledge in the public gallery staff and student leaders from Lake Gwelup Primary School in Gwelup, including, I am told, the member for Jandakot's nephew. I think the Kalamunda guests have left.

On behalf of the member for Cannington, I acknowledge students and staff from St Norbert College. I would also particularly like to welcome the Mayor of the City of Gosnells, Teresa Lynes, who is a guest of the member for Thornlie. All students from the various schools are very welcome here today.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

NICHELIVING — ADMINISTRATION

789. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Premier:

I refer to reports that Projex Management and Construction, trading as Nicheliving, has entered administration, leaving numerous Western Australian tradespeople with unpaid invoices, including a local gyprocker who is owed \$300 000 and a concreter who is owed \$200 000.

- (1) What support, if any, will the state government provide to impacted tradespeople who now face substantial financial losses due to Nicheliving's collapse?
- (2) Why did the government not take earlier action to safeguard the interests of both tradespeople and customers affected by Nicheliving's practices?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) Of course, as the member says, Projex Management and Construction, the parent company of Nicheliving, has entered external administration. That confirms the importance of the decisions of government to deregister the company because we had grave concerns as to the viability of the company. Contrary to what the member suggests, this actually reinforces the decisions that we made to ensure that we brought justice to those particular members of the WA public who had unwittingly been caught up in the difficulties that confront Nicheliving. Because of our actions, those customers got earlier access to the home indemnity insurance scheme so they could then get access to the funds and get their homes finished as quickly as possible. That is what my government did. It took immediate action, appropriate action, and intervened during the appeals process under the State Administrative Tribunal to ensure that we brought an outcome as soon as possible. The Building Services Board's decision to deregister the company on financial grounds has been vindicated, and I am very pleased that the government processes were working in this case in the interests of those particular clients, because we wanted to make sure they were given justice. They have been waiting for many months—years—to have their homes built. They deserve to have their homes built. They signed a contract and they paid good money, and they deserve to have their homes built as soon as possible, which is the reason we acted with the sense of urgency we did. That is the reason those people can now get access to the home indemnity insurance scheme. Those are the very actions that those opposite criticise. They criticised it. I am pleased we intervened when we did because it meant that those customers could get a roof over their heads much sooner than would otherwise be possible.

Visitors — Lumen Christi College

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, before I give you the supplementary, on behalf of the members for Thornlie and Southern River, I meant to warmly welcome the Lumen Christi College students who were in the gallery.

NICHELIVING — ADMINISTRATION

790. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Premier:

Why did the government's deal with Nicheliving let those company directors off the hook with no financial penalty?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

Madam Speaker, I draw your attention to the fact that that was not a supplementary question at all. The member has now gone back off on some other pathway of inquiry because, quite simply, we managed to answer his original questions. We have, in large part, done what we said we would do, which was to give those customers relief as soon as possible. By intervening when we did, we sped up that process. That seems to be what the member opposite has trouble with—the idea that the government would intervene and take a leadership role and make sure that those customers got a roof over their heads as soon as possible. If the member differs with that, he should make his position clear. However, what we can gather from his questioning is that he does not believe the government should have intervened when we did—that he believes the situation should have been allowed to just pedal out, roll out, over a period, with the only beneficiaries being lawyers for both sides. I am very proud that we took proactive, deliberate steps to bring relief to those customers and make sure they got a roof over their heads as soon as possible and, certainly, much quicker than they would have were the opposition in government.

STATE ECONOMY — MANAGEMENT

791. Mr G. BAKER to the Premier:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's sustained economic management of Western Australia.

- (1) Can the Premier update the house on Western Australia's latest economic results?
- (2) Can the Premier advise the house how Western Australia's current economic position compares to that in previous years?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for the question because, as we know, the past year has presented a lot of economic challenges across the globe. International economies have navigated inflation, volatile commodities and the impact of war. Western Australia is no exception, but what sets us apart is the fact that we have overcome these challenges better than anywhere else. Our economy has met the challenges with WA's trademark resilience. As a result, our state has the strongest economy, and in recent years we have consistently led the nation. Let us look at some of the facts. More than 321 000 jobs have been created since we were elected in 2017. In fact, we have kept unemployment below four per cent—around an average of 3.7 per cent—for the past three years. That is an extraordinary record and one of which Western Australians should be rightly proud. The number of people in a job reached a new record of 1.62 million. Western Australia has grown by nearly 24 per cent since pre-pandemic levels. In short, what was once the worst performing economy in the nation, just some seven years ago, is now the best performing economy in the country. It is official. That is backed up by the latest CommSec *State of the states* report.

A major contributor to this success was the resources industry. The latest data on performance in WA's resources sector shows that it recorded its seventh consecutive year of jobs growth. It shows that a record 135 000 full-time jobs are supported by the sector. That is around 9 000 more jobs than at this time last year. At the same time, mineral and petroleum sales remain strong at \$238 billion. Iron ore achieved 866 million tonnes—the most ever—while sales remain strong at \$142 billion, and gold achieved all-time high sales of \$21 billion, driven by the highest prices ever recorded. Let us just reflect on that for a moment. There is no other Premier in the country standing up reading out these statistics for their states for jobs growth, the growth of the economy and the number of people in employment. Western Australia remains the leading destination for exploration and investment in Australia, particularly in critical minerals. Although our foundation resources are continuing to perform for Western Australia, the future is bright when we consider the opportunities that exist in the critical minerals sector.

The WA Labor government has a history of supporting strong budget management. We have always balanced the budget using very conservative estimates for the mining royalties. We have protected the state's finances from the sudden changes in commodity prices that occur from time to time. That stands in stark contrast to those opposite. The previous government baked into its budgets higher prices and hefty assumptions so that it could justify its budget spending. Of course, there was no contingency for the whim of the market, and that created massive risks to the state's finances. When the prices receded, it created huge budget deficits and record debt. As a result, the former government cancelled major infrastructure projects like the Ellenbrook rail line. It made plans to sell state assets like Western Power and the Fremantle Port Authority. It delivered increases in land taxes three years in a row of 12.5 per cent, 10 per cent and then a whopping 25 per cent. Lastly, we saw it propose a \$5-a-tonne mining tax. We all saw how that turned out.

We have been careful with the state's finances. We have struck the right balance between sharing the benefits of our resources and encouraging investment. As a result, our budget position will remain strong under my government. Therefore, we have been able to offer cost-of-living relief to Western Australians. My key commitment upon being elected was that we would keep the economy strong and support those who are doing it tough, and that is exactly what we have done. At the same time, we are investing in projects that are setting up the state for the future. We can continue to feel proud about the growth and strength of the economy today and we are making plans to lock in that growth and strength into the future. That will happen only under a WA Labor government.

NICHELIVING — STATE ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL APPEAL AGREEMENT

792. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:

I refer to the news earlier today that Nicheliving has entered into voluntary administration, despite previous assurances, and the Premier's refusal yesterday to answer a direct question from the Leader of the Opposition on Nicheliving's contact with the Labor Business Roundtable.

- (1) How many cash-for-access meetings did the Premier have with Nicheliving as part of the Labor Business Roundtable?
- (2) How did Nicheliving's cash-for-access meetings affect the government's decision to cut a deal worth \$40 million —

The SPEAKER: Sit down. Resume your seat, member for Vasse.

Point of Order

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I question the legitimacy of the question relating to the Premier's responsibilities. They are to be very specifically related to the portfolio. The expectation that the Premier can answer these detailed questions is not appropriate.

The SPEAKER: By way of commentary on the point of order and the member's question, firstly, I was starting to query it in my mind in terms of the member trying to attribute some kind of improper motivation. Further, the member's introduction to the question is phenomenally too long. If you actually turn your attention to the standing orders, you will see that you are not supposed to have all of that argument and all those statements in there. On many levels your question has a number of issues. Perhaps you can shorten your question and also be very mindful of attempting to attribute any improper motivation to the Premier. Generally, that kind of imputation can be made only by way of substantive motion.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Ms L. METTAM: My question is: how many cash-for-access meetings did the Premier have —

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Swan Hills, I would really not like to have to ask you to leave.

Ms L. METTAM: How did Nicheliving's cash-for-access meetings affect the Premier's decision to cut it a deal with \$40 million of taxpayers' money?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) The activities that take place at party-based events have nothing to do with my portfolio, so I will not answer those questions. However, I would be happy to reflect on the fact that the member for Vasse inveigled the name of a particular individual who, allegedly, has been involved in these things. This is the same individual who assisted the Liberal candidate for Churchlands in his mayoral election campaigns. I am not quite sure why the member for Vasse would be so concerned about the activities of this particular individual when he has spent so much time with members of her own party and, indeed, her shadow Treasurer. I am not quite sure why the member for Vasse is raising a particular identity in this place. She may have her own motivations for that.

Point of Order

Mr R.S. Love: Point of order.

The SPEAKER: I am going to take the point of order, but I remind members that points of order are held in silence.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I do not think the Premier's answer had any relevance to the question that was asked. I would direct that the question be re-answered.

The SPEAKER: I am not upholding your point of order. The Premier has answered the question as he sees fit. Have you finished, member for Vasse, or would you like a supplementary question?

NICHELIVING — STATE ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL APPEAL AGREEMENT

793. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. How many cash-for-access meetings did the Premier have with Nicheliving as part of the —

The SPEAKER: That concludes your question. You have asked a single question. The Premier.

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

Sorry, you want me to answer that. It has nothing to do with my portfolio, so I will not reflect on the question.

HEALTH — INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

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

I refer to the Cook Labor government's record investment in health services, including \$14.3 billion in additional funding in the last three years.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the delivery of improvements to hospitals in regional Western Australia, including at Tom Price?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house whether she is aware of any alternative proposals to deliver improvements in WA hospitals?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Kalgoorlie for her question and her advocacy for her community, particularly for the delivery of regional health care. This government is delivering care closer to home for regional

communities and has doubled the amount of cancer services delivered in regional communities since coming to government. We have also invested record funding into improving the infrastructure across 2.5 million square kilometres and hundreds of sites, some of which are very, very remote. One of those sites is Tom Price Hospital, the redevelopment of which was committed to by former Premier Mark McGowan in 2021 in partnership with Rio Tinto, which has provided \$20 million to support the Tom Price Hospital project. This year, the Cook government committed to the redevelopment of not only Tom Price Hospital, but also the neighbouring Paraburdoo Hospital, which is relatively close and is also in need of an upgrade. Again, that is with an additional contribution of \$20 million from Rio Tinto for each of those hospitals.

I am pleased to inform the house that the government has just awarded the contract for early contractor involvement to Cooper and Oxley. This is a really exciting step forward for that project. We expect the groundworks to commence soon. That is as well as the Laverton Hospital redevelopment in the member's electorate. We have already awarded the contract for forward works for that project, which will start this year. The redevelopment of Geraldton Health Campus is also well underway. Members can see that it is coming out of the ground as we speak. The contract for the redevelopment of Bunbury Regional Hospital has also been awarded. Those works will commence early in the new year. They are all projects that the Liberal and National Parties did not even touch in the eight and a half years they were in government. They did not go near them.

In this term of government, we delivered the brand new Newman Health Service. That is a beautiful regional health campus in Newman. We have delivered the Albany radiation oncology service, which delivers more radiation oncology closer to home for the residents of Albany, we have upgraded Collie Hospital—it has beautiful new theatres—and Dongara, Plantagenet, Cranbrook, Boddington, Dalwallinu and Wongan Hills Hospitals, as well as provided another 30 beds at Bunbury Regional Hospital. It has been a record for investment and activity in our regional hospitals.

We recently saw an op-ed from the Leader of the Liberal Party in which she strangely interpreted the Langouant report as being reasonably good for the former Liberal–National government! She wrote that it was —

... found to be well-managed and provided good value for money, while some were seen as evidence of risky decision-making.

Clearly, the Leader of the Liberal Party read the 900-page damning report as an endorsement of her former government. Let us run through some of those risky decisions that the former Liberal–National government made. Fiona Stanley Hospital's \$4.3 billion —

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please.

Ms A. SANDERSON: One was the \$4.3 billion Fiona Stanley Hospital contract with Serco with no business case. It privatised the whole hospital with no business case. Perth Children's Hospital had asbestos in the roof and lead in the water.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Ms A. SANDERSON: That is your record.

The SPEAKER: Minister, pause for a moment. Member for Cottesloe and member for Vasse, your interjections are incessant. It makes it difficult for Hansard to record proceedings and for other people to hear. Please do not continue to interject. This is not your question.

Ms A. SANDERSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We all know that Perth Children's Hospital had asbestos in the roof and lead in the water. The Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre car park was privatised by that government and it is now almost impossible to resolve parking issues on that campus and there are questions over the, I quote, "value for money" of that project. There was a 20-year contract to privatise St John of God Midland Public Hospital, without any sterilisation procedures. The former government failed to include the \$27 million cost of earthworks for the Karratha Health Campus. The Cook Labor government delivers record infrastructure responsibly and appropriately for those communities. We do not just go off and privatise things with no business case; we do it responsibly.

Unlike this government, there is a Liberal candidate out there who has a plan for another hospital—that is, the Liberal candidate for Dawesville. He made a social media post yesterday saying that not only will he get the upgrade done for Peel Health Campus, but also he will start a brand new hospital in Peel—a brand new hospital in Peel!

Mr R.H. Cook: That sounds expensive!

Ms A. SANDERSON: Yes, it does!

The Leader of the Liberal Party has lost control. She has lost control. Is it going to come out of the \$400 million magic pudding that is already paying for the Nationals WA's promises as well as the Liberal Party's promises? Now

we have candidates promising brand new hospitals in their seats. They cannot be trusted on health. Labor delivers beds and more staff, improves infrastructure and builds new hospitals. These guys—the Liberal Party and the Nationals—privatise and promise the earth but they never deliver.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION — KIMBERLEY

795. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Education:

I note that Catholic Education WA provides the sole education option at seven locations in the Kimberley.

- (1) What would the cost to taxpayers be if Catholic Education WA were to leave the Kimberley?
- (2) Why is CEWA having to come to the government to ask for \$100 million over five years to address capital underfunding when it has a \$4 billion surplus?

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

- (1) Madam Speaker —

The SPEAKER: Order, please. I am not sure whether you were given any notice of this question, but I would have thought at least one element of that question required notice.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for pointing out that for the first part of the question I do not have an answer off the top of my head. If the member gives me some notice, I will provide him with the answer.

- (2) In regard to the second part of the member's question, I was at a forum earlier in the year with the Leader of the Liberal Party and also Hon Donna Faragher at which we were all asked a question about funding for Catholic schools. No commitment was made by the member's side, so do not stand up in here and try to be almighty to anyone because now there has been a bit of movement, or a bit of advocacy, in this space. We have been talking to Catholic Education all year about it. How much talking has the member done with CEWA about this issue? He just found out about it yesterday!

CATHOLIC EDUCATION — KIMBERLEY

796. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Education:

I have a supplementary question. Minister, Catholic Education provides a valuable —

The SPEAKER: Before you ask your supplementary, I remind you that there is no statement—just a direct question.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Will the minister address this embarrassing and concerning situation immediately?

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

For the member's education, I think he would know about the low-interest loans that the government has provided for a number of years for Catholic and Independent schools, which are a considerable benefit to those sectors. We provide low-interest loans. We provide substantial support in many areas when it comes to non-government education, and we are very proud of that.

HOUSING — SUPPLY

797. Ms J.L. HANNS to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's record \$3.2 billion investment to support the delivery of more housing in Western Australia.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how this investment is helping bolster the supply of housing across Western Australia, including in the regions?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this government's sustained investment compares with proposals by those opposite?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

- (1) I thank the member for her question. Of course, with the local member, I visited some of our exciting social housing projects in Collie. As the member knows, we have a laser focus on boosting housing supply across Western Australia. We understand that we have to tackle all parts of the equation. That includes getting more land available out in regional markets. We understand that unlocking land in regional communities requires stronger government intervention and stronger government investment because some of the hurdles, particularly the cost of headworks, make it unviable to get land out the door.

I am deeply proud of our Regional Land Booster program. To date, it has seen 778 lots contracted across 99 projects in 83 regional towns with a combined value of \$183 million. There is direct support, and, right now, 482 residential mixed-use lots are for sale. Our investment is unlocking land. We as a government are also being strategic by working with local governments and other partners to unlock projects, whether it is through our regional community housing grants program that has allocated \$50 million to the regions to allow not-for-profits to come forward with housing projects, working with Perdaman to unlock

170 residential lots to enable homes to be built there rather than have people working fly-in fly-out, or working with the Country Women's Association in Albany and providing funding to convert holiday accommodation into transitional accommodation for people at risk of homelessness. I was in Geraldton with the member for Geraldton to also provide a direct grant to enable new homes to be built for workers accommodation. It will provide a win-win by not only boosting housing supply in Geraldton but also providing assets to City of Greater Geraldton ratepayers. It demonstrates that we are seizing opportunities on both large-scale and individual projects that are brought forward.

- (2) Compare that with what the Nationals WA are proposing in regional Western Australia. As we heard our greatest friend, the Liberal candidate for Cottesloe, say at the time of our planning reforms —

“Every home builder will benefit from these reforms—whether they be small, medium or large.

They are builders in regional Western Australia, of course. As we know, the Nationals are taking a plan to the next election that will increase red tape. The Nationals want to change the development assessment panel system to make it three and three. That would ultimately mean that many decisions would not be made and many decisions would end up in the State Administrative Tribunal, just from that equation. You do not have to be a genius—you can even be the member for Cottesloe—to understand that three and three is not going to work. Worse still, the Nationals WA want to lift the threshold on the DAP system. This would mean that small building companies would be forced to go back to their local governments and have longer delays. That is the reality of the National Party. We have heard the Nationals complain in this chamber about red tape from local governments. The member for Roe whinged about red tape in this chamber, yet the Nationals will take a policy to the next election that would make it harder to get housing supply in regional Western Australia. There is a clear choice at the next election between that side, which wants more red tape and hurdles for housing supply, and this side, which is trying to do everything it can to boost housing supply in regional Western Australia.

WATER — NORTH WANNEROO

798. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Water:

I refer to the government's plans to cut water allocations to horticulturalists in the north Wanneroo area by 10 per cent and the commitment to establish a new horticultural precinct near north Wanneroo.

- (1) Does the minister still intend to cut the water allocations to horticulturalists in north Wanneroo by 10 per cent?
- (2) What progress has the minister made in establishing the new horticultural precinct near north Wanneroo that was promised?

A member interjected.

The SPEAKER: Just before I give you the call, Minister for Water, I remind members that all interjections are disorderly, but interjecting from out of your place that is not your proper seat in the chamber is highly disorderly.

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

- (1)–(2) Thank you, Madam Speaker. In fact, I was probably goading the opposition because I was saying just yesterday that it had been over 400 days since I had been asked a question about water in this place—over a year since the opposition has asked any questions of my portfolio. I have to get people from my own side to ask me questions. It is the only time I am able to get up on my feet, so I guess I should be grateful for that!

Regarding the areas of constraint that the member is talking about, he would be aware that this relates to the *Gnangara groundwater allocation plan*, which was announced in June 2022. The scheme we are talking about has been in place for over two years—that is, the plan we have to reduce our reliance on Gnangara mound as a water source for all of those affected areas. It is a massive change, and it is a massive challenge for the state in terms of managing our water resources. We have a hotter climate, less rainfall and less replenishment of our groundwater, but more demand because of population growth. In regard to Gnangara mound, which people would be aware is a huge resource for the broader metropolitan area, particularly the northern suburbs and up to the Wanneroo area the member is referring to, the plan is to reduce our take from that considerably. First of all, the Water Corporation is taking the lion's share of the reduction in take, if you like. Overall, there will be a 19 per cent reduction in the amount of take from Gnangara mound, so it will be a significant improvement and there will be less pressure on what we are taking from the Gnangara mound. That will comprise, in part, a 27 per cent reduction in the Water Corporation's take, so it is a massive change for the Water Corporation. Of course, we are building the Alkimos desalination plant, and that will replace much of the reduction in the Water Corporation's take from Gnangara.

Everyone else—commercial users, home bore users and local governments—is also experiencing changes. Remember, we were asking home bore users to go from using their sprinklers in summer from three days a week to two days. It has been a big adjustment, but people have made that adjustment and we are grateful

for it. Commercial users and local governments are being asked to accept a 10 per cent cut. We have put grants out to the local councils, so \$4 million has been taken up by the Cities of Joondalup, Perth, Stirling, Swan, Vincent and Wanneroo, and the Towns of Cambridge and Bassendean. They have all been finalised and they are benefiting from that. There are also some grants for water use efficiency to commercial users.

All of this support is in place for that 10 per cent cut that will come into place in 2028. There has been plenty of advance notice and support. The Gngangara horticulture water use efficiency grants, worth over half a million dollars, will be put out to commercial users so they can be given some support to increase their water efficiency. I understand that it is difficult, particularly for commercial users who rely very much on our groundwater sources, but we are in a drying climate. We have less rainfall and hotter temperatures, so change is necessary.

WATER — NORTH WANNEROO

799. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Water:

I have a supplementary question. That is only half the answer. Why have the minister and her government abandoned proper support for critical food production in the north Wanneroo area?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

Unlike the opposition, whether it is the Liberal Party or the Nationals WA, we are not in denial about climate change.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Ms S.F. McGURK: Do not yell at me, member! You asked a question, so perhaps you can listen to the answer for once. Perhaps you should not yell at me across the chamber, member.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cottesloe!

Ms S.F. McGURK: Can you please stop —

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cottesloe, stop interjecting. The minister has said that she does not welcome your interjections.

Ms S.F. McGURK: First of all, we are not in denial about climate change. We understand that it needs a response in terms of the government reducing our own emissions and managing our economy, but we also know that we have to adapt. In 2024–25, the community knows that. We understand this is a huge challenge across our state.

In regard to the question that the member for Cottesloe raised about whether there has been support for growers, I just referred to over half a million dollars that has been made available through the Gngangara horticulture water use efficiency grants—\$544 528 to be precise. We have worked with those growers to make sure that these grants are appropriate for them. One of the challenges is that a lot of those growers lease their land, so they are less likely to want to invest in infrastructure, even though it might mean a better and more efficient use of their water. We have reshaped the grants and made sure that they will be of practical use to those growers. We are working with them to make sure that they are using the best available science and opportunities to maximise the use of water. For instance, not in Wanneroo but in Manjimup, I met with avocado growers who have put in place climate sensitive sensors so that when rainfall is expected, less irrigation occurs. This is a modern use of technology to make sure we are making the best use of our water. We want to support growers to do that, but we cannot deny that we are in a drying climate. It is hotter and there are more challenges. We are not in denial about that. Where does the opposition stand?

If the member for Cottesloe, and I guess this question is also to the member for Vasse, has such confidence that people in Wanneroo are behind Liberal Party, why does it not have a candidate for that area? Perhaps they could explain that. We are now in the first week of November and the Liberal Party does not have a candidate. That is hardly a ringing endorsement for their own party.

The SPEAKER: Minister, I preferred it when you were not inviting interjections.

FIREARMS — INDUSTRY BUYBACK PROGRAM

800. Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE to the Minister for Police:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's successful voluntary firearms buyback program, which removed more than 38 000 guns from our community.

- (1) Can the minister advise the house on how the government's decision to expand the firearms buyback will allow for the removal of more guns from the Western Australian community?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house whether he is aware of anyone continuing to advocate for more guns in the community?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

- (1) I thank the member for his question. With respect to the first part of his question, today we announced the commencement of a new buyback scheme. We did one earlier in the year that was for individual firearms licence holders. We announced a buyback scheme for the firearms industry from today until 17 January—10 weeks. Firearms traders can now take the opportunity to hand over firearms that are in excess of stock on hand and receive some money for them. We know that right now, today, some 38 000 firearms are held by firearms traders across the state. Noting that our very successful individual buyback scheme took more than 38 000 firearms off the streets and out of the suburbs and community, the same number of firearms is currently held by firearms traders. Admittedly, we understand that the environment has shifted for firearms traders. They may have stock they will not necessarily be able to shift in the future, so this is an opportunity to divest themselves of those firearms. We also know that since 2017, some 500 firearms have been stolen from traders. If a trader has a stockpile of firearms, they are a target. This is an opportunity to reduce the size of that target and their vulnerability and remove more firearms from the community. If there are fewer firearms in the community, there will be less chance of them finding their way into the hands of people who will do harm with those firearms. That is the objective. Clearly, the first buyback was valuable, and I anticipate the second one will also be very successful and worthwhile.
- (2) With respect to the second part of the question, sadly, there are people advocating for more firearms—more guns—in the community. The Nationals WA have unashamedly advocated for an American-style gun culture in Western Australia—unlimited guns.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr P. PAPALIA: The National Party wants unlimited guns for anyone who wants them. That is its position. It is opposed to any of the limits imposed by our laws. Its position is known and, shameful though it is, it is probably understandable noting that it got \$50 000 from the gun lobby. That is its position.

Sadly, we saw yesterday the Liberal Party's shambolic press conference at which it demonstrated just how confused and inconsistent it is. At the press conference, two individuals from the Liberal Party—one, the notional Leader of the Liberal Party, who stood next to the leader of "The Clan"—had different positions on gun laws. The Leader of the Liberal Party suggested that she backs them in and is supportive of strong gun laws and limiting the number of guns in the community, but the leader of "The Clan" completely contradicted her and suggested that the Liberal Party would change the laws at the behest of the National Party after the next election.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Police, can I seek clarification that you are not improperly referring to a member of the upper house —

Mr P. PAPALIA: Sorry, Speaker.

The SPEAKER: — because if you are referring to a member of the upper house, you need to refer to them by the title honourable and their name.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Correct. I am sorry.

To clarify, the Leader of the Liberal Party and Hon Peter Collier, the leader of "The Clan", were at the press conference.

A government member: Goiran?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, yesterday it was Peter Collier; they are dual leaders of the "The Clan". There are a couple of them.

The SPEAKER: Sorry; it is Hon Peter Collier.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes, Hon Peter Collier.

Several members interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The question, member for Vasse is: Where do you stand? How much power do you have? How much responsibility do you have on behalf of the Liberal Party of Western Australia? Are you able to reign in the people who really control the party and get them to back in? Do you believe in tougher gun laws or will you fold to the demands, conditions and ultimatums of the National Party? Will you fold to the National Party? That is a good question for you.

LIVE EXPORT — TRANSITION PACKAGE

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

I refer to the Australian Labor government's decision to end live sheep exports by sea and to the Senate estimates revelation that the state government sucked up \$2 million from the so-called transition package for administration costs.

What is the government doing to support those farmers, shearers, truck drivers and regional communities who do not want the government's transition package, but want a viable industry instead?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

We have been clear from the start that we do not support the federal government's ban on live sheep exports, but it took that proposal to the people of Australia and it was endorsed at an election. It might have taken a leaf out of the book of the current Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party who first introduced this legislation to the Parliament. If the member wants to find the real root cause of this national movement to ban live sheep exports, he should turn to his right and consult his friends in blue next to him. They are the ones who started this.

The federal government put those laws to the federal Parliament and those laws passed. That is now law and we must comply with the law. But we have always said that we want the federal government to assist farmers in the transition. Many farmers have put to us that they are ready for a new way of farming and a new way of carrying out their businesses.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr R.H. COOK: We will continue to support those farmers who are looking to transition. The transition will take place over a number of years. The laws will not take hold until May 2028. There is an important opportunity now to make sure we have the measures in place to support them. This is a federal law. The federal government has asked for state government assistance to manage the programs that it envisages will take place under the transition process. Obviously, we are very happy to do that, but the federal government has to pay for it. That is why we are talking to the federal government about what programs it wants implemented and the costs associated with running those programs, which, of course, is a legitimate part of the overall transition package.

LIVE EXPORT — TRANSITION PACKAGE

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

I have a supplementary question. How can the Premier say he supports the trade when he is facilitating its very demise?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

Here we have the Nationals WA policy: turn your back on farmers and pretend nothing is happening in the world. The Nationals policy is to simply deny the fact that we have these laws. If we listen to the member for Roe, we must now stick our heads in the sand and pretend that nothing is going on, that nothing is happening and that these laws did not pass. If we listened to the member for Roe, we would do nothing; that is what he is proposing now. We do not think that is an option. We think that supporting our farmers is the only way forward and, as a result, we have been lobbying the federal government for extra resources for the transition package, and the federal government has listened to us. In addition, the federal government has asked us for our assistance in delivering some of the transition package on the ground. We said, "Yes, but these are your laws, federal government, so you need to make sure that you pay for those programs", and it is up for that. We will continue to work with the federal government and the farming community to ensure that we support our farming community as part of this transition. We will not do what those opposite want us to do, which is to stick our heads in the sand and pretend that nothing is going on.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr R.H. COOK: The member for Bullwinkel—sorry, we know why the member for Central Wheatbelt is making these noises. She has more of an eye on federal politics nowadays!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr R.H. COOK: We understand why she is particularly focused on federal laws. We are focused on WA farmers and we will continue to make sure that we work with WA farmers on this transition package.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr R.H. COOK: The stench of hypocrisy in this room coming from those opposite is getting overwhelming.

We will continue to work with the farming community to implement this important transition package. We will not do what members opposite propose, which is to stick our heads in the sand, pretend that nothing is going on and hope that it all goes away. That is not an option for WA farmers and it is not an option for my government.

EAST FREMANTLE COMMUNITY PARK — REDEVELOPMENT

803. Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to improve community facilities and infrastructure.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the delivery of this government's \$34 million redevelopment of East Fremantle Community Park?

- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this project will benefit the local community, including local supporting clubs?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

- (1)–(2) Yes and yes, I can; and yes and yes, I will! Firstly, I want to congratulate the member for Bicton. Her advocacy reflects the advocacy of so many members in this place who very strongly advocate for important community infrastructure that makes a difference to the lives of local people. I have not seen a fiercer advocate than the member. She is amazing, and I mean that. I know that this project was very important to the member when she was campaigning and I know that what is now completed there in East Fremantle in her electorate of Bicton will be a magnificent showcase of community opportunity. In reply to the member’s question, the infrastructure there is truly remarkable. It is a commitment of over \$26 million by this Cook Labor government, which is focused on making a difference.

The member asked what sorts of things there are. We know that the work will see, of course, the redevelopment of the football oval and floodlighting; multi-sex—sorry, unisex changing rooms.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: An interesting design! It has a dog exercise area; a skate zone; community gardens; a cafe, bar and kitchen facilities; function areas and a commercial gym that have been created; and, of course, it also supports three important clubs, which includes the great East Fremantle Football Club. That club has now moved in. I think the member even helped them with their boxes the other day. The East Fremantle Football Club is there, and the East Fremantle Bowling Club and the East Fremantle Croquet Club are also accommodated. This is tremendous. It means that the communities that both live in the immediate area and are able to access that facility from further afield will be able to engage in a top-quality community asset. They will be able to do that in a safe way. I think that the East Fremantle Football Club and the other clubs there now have an opportunity to expand their memberships, because people will have a great interest in those places. It also highlights that, when asked, we have also assisted the Sharks with an additional \$340 000 to accommodate its needs, which include fit-out costs, a new video scoreboard and signage—all of which the member advocated for. I actually think that the oval should be called the “Lisa O’Malley Oval”. I honestly believe that!

Mrs L.M. O’Malley: It’s not exclusively mine!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I know, but it still should be named after the member, because this is a great example of great Labor members working hard in their communities, getting out, continually engaging with and speaking to the local community about their needs and aspirations and then delivering. I could go through lots of projects, such as the “Munday Bridge” in my own area. I have been there for 24 years. I could not get a dualling of the bridge; I could not do it, but the member for Dawesville did. After all the years it was a Liberal seat, the member for Dawesville achieved the bridge there in Dawesville. It should be called the “Munday Bridge” when it opens in 2026. Then there is the member for Geraldton. She worked hard with the hospital and community facilities. There are lots of good examples, but this is a great example of local Labor members talking to their community, engaging with their community and then delivering. Well done! We are excited about going and opening that facility in the fullness of time. The benefits are going to be huge, but will be lasting, and that is the big difference. They are lasting legacies. Again, I will put forward the member’s name to the names committee as a suggestion only. It might be the “McGurk–O’Malley Oval”, perhaps! But whatever it is called, it will be there for the ongoing future for the benefit of people of all ages and all backgrounds. It is fantastic, so well done, member for Bicton; you have done a brilliant job. Those people there should really understand just what the member has been able to deliver for that area in the time that she has been here in this place.

TARGET 120 — MEEKATHARRA AND CARNARVON

804. Ms M. BEARD to the Minister for Child Protection:

I refer to the Target 120 program, an early intervention program designed to steer at-risk youth away from the criminal justice system, along with the desperate need for safe night space programs for vulnerable and disengaged youth, particularly in towns such as Meekatharra and Carnarvon.

- (1) Given school attendance rates are seemingly in decline, along with an ongoing rise in youth crime and antisocial behaviour, will the minister provide an update on the Target 120 program and its effectiveness in Carnarvon?
- (2) Will the minister commit to safe spaces in Meekatharra and Carnarvon for use by disengaged youth at night?

Ms S.E. WINTON replied:

- (1) It is lovely to see that the Liberal Party at least in this place is interested in the electorate of Wanneroo. I look forward to a local champion taking it up on its behalf.

I thank the member for North West Central for her question and her ongoing interest in what are challenging and complex issues for young people in our regions, and also in our city. Let us face it, everyone: it is not

easy to be a young person at the moment. I am glad that the member highlighted Target 120 in her question, because, of course, Target 120 was an election commitment by us around realising, appreciating and wanting to value and invest in young people and provide them every opportunity to reach their potential. As members know, Target 120 sees some \$43 million invested in 20 locations right around the state to support young people aged 10 to 14 years who have had some interaction with police and provide them with the intensive resources to guide them back to positive activity in their life, whether it is supporting them through engagement with schools or supporting them through engagement with social activities throughout their communities.

Target 120 is a pretty special program because it also relies on a whole-of-government and whole-of-community response. In each location for Target 120, we have a standing committee made up of representatives from the Departments of Health, Education and Communities and involving the police to provide a holistic response to those vulnerable young people, and we know we are having great outcomes right around the state.

If the member had given me some notice, I would have been happy to provide some more detail specifically on the Carnarvon site. As when the member has made contact with my office previously, I would be happy to provide her with a briefing on Carnarvon and how it specifically is going.

- (2) The other part of the member's question referred to Safe Places. I know that the member has advocated for that strongly in Carnarvon and other places. I, as well as all members of government, am very interested all the time in place-based solutions, because communities know best what works for them. But I would also caution the member for North West Central. It is not as simplistic as I think her questions sometimes imply, because those safe places also need to make sure that those young people are protected in that environment. I am always open to new suggestions. We know we are doing great work in safe spaces in Broome. We do great work in providing a safe place for young people who are disengaged and at risk late at night in Northbridge. Our government is focused on working with local communities to support and enable them to provide the supports that they know work best with their young people in their communities.

TARGET 120 — MEEKATHARRA AND CARNARVON

805. Ms M. BEARD to the Minister for Child Protection:

I have a supplementary question. Does the minister acknowledge that there is an urgent need for a night space program for the kids in Carnarvon and Meekatharra?

Ms S.E. WINTON replied:

I want to acknowledge the incredible amount of work that is happening right around the state in a variety of programs in not only my portfolio, but also the police and justice portfolios. I refer to programs aimed at supporting vulnerable people. In reference to Carnarvon, I have said in this place before that I have a great working relationship with the Shire President of Carnarvon, Eddie, who rings me from time to time personally, provides me with feedback and asks for support for particular programs that are running in Carnarvon.

In Carnarvon in particular, we have the Target 120 program, which I have previously talked about. We have the Carnarvon youth services and the Aboriginal community connectors program. We also have the intensive family support service and, of course, we have the Home Stretch program. Members might remember Home Stretch. That is our government's legacy program that sees support for young people in care extended from 18 to 21 years. That is a significant investment backing in young people to be the best people they can be. We have the Gascoyne Women's Refuge and the Carnarvon sexual assault response service. We also have the Gascoyne Development Commission, which does incredible work in obtaining commonwealth funding to support programs in Carnarvon.

Member, as I said before, I will continue to work with communities. I am happy to listen to organisations that have aspirations for programs that they know will work for their communities. Safe Places is just one of a variety of programs that can make a difference in young people's lives. I am a big supporter of the development of local solutions for local communities to address their problems, because we know that works when we listen to communities. I am happy to listen to the community and work with it to provide local solutions, but we must remember—I stress this—that when we are talking about children in particular, any proposals need to be lawful and appropriate, and they need to have national ChildSafe principles.

The SPEAKER: That concludes question time.

RESERVES BILL 2024

Second Reading

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Environment) [3.01 pm]: I welcome the opportunity to comment on this important legislation, the Reserves Bill 2024, and contribute to the second reading debate in the house this afternoon. This bill speaks to our government's commitment to protecting our beautiful and unique environment

here in Western Australia. Before I talk about the land that will be added to the conservation estate through this bill, it is important to reflect upon what we have done for the environment so far, because a lot has been achieved. Under the Cook Labor government's Plan for Our Parks, the government has committed to the largest and most comprehensive conservation estate expansion program in the state's history. This is a commitment to add an additional five million hectares of land and sea to WA's conservation estate over five short years. That is a massive increase and a huge effort. It has involved the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions and other agencies of government and local communities working together to achieve this incredible outcome.

I am pleased to note that not only will we achieve that target of five million hectares in five years, but also we will actually beat that target by the end of this year, and by quite a margin. I am not going to reveal the exact number; I will keep members in —

Mr D.J. Kelly: It's a bit like Telethon!

Mr R.R. WHITBY: That is right; we do not read out the total until the end! But it will be worth waiting for.

Mr D.A. Templeman: You'll keep me in suspenders!

Mr R.R. WHITBY: In suspenders, yes!

It is an amazing achievement. We have not only met that target, but also exceeded it, and the final number will mean that we will have increased the conservation estate by almost 30 per cent. Imagine that. Since the establishment of Western Australia, we have increased our conservation estate by 30 per cent in only the last five years. That is an incredible feat and will be a lasting legacy of this government for the state and the people of Western Australia.

It also comes with other benefits. There is the creation of 250 direct jobs, most of which are based in the regions. I have talked about the Aboriginal ranger programs, which are providing a sense of fulfilment and aspiration for many Indigenous people. When Aboriginal rangers walk through their communities, they feel 10 feet tall. The kids look up to them and aspire to be one of them. It is a wonderful program, and who better to care for country than our Indigenous communities?

A total of 28 proposals have been identified under this initiative, and one of the most important recent additions is the establishment of the South Coast Marine Park. The marine park covers more than a thousand kilometres of coastline, from Bremer Bay to the South Australian border, and about 1.3 million hectares of water. It is the largest reserve proposal under the Plan for Our Parks initiative. The marine park will afford significant protection to marine life along Western Australia's south coast, which is home to species found nowhere else in the world; only one per cent of state waters are currently protected. That is a magnificent achievement.

It is about not only protecting our most sensitive and stunning ecological communities, but also affording opportunities to future generations, whether they are local businesses along the south coast, tourism operators, traditional owners, joint managers or commercial or recreational fishers. It is about their future as well. I cannot overstate the significance of this marine park on our south coast. We now have a marine park that is right up there to rival the Ningaloo Marine Park and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park as an amazing marine park destination. It is a win for the environment, a win for the regional economy and a win for the south coast.

While I have the opportunity, I want to acknowledge the commitment and engagement of all stakeholders in this process. They have all sat down in good faith to engage in the process. The government has had meaningful and constructive discussions and has reached an outcome that strikes the right balance between conservation and the wonderful things we enjoy, and will continue to enjoy, about that part of the world, like swimming, fishing, diving and all our other engagements with the south coast. It is a significant outcome. I also want to acknowledge the fact that there has been real engagement with the government in this process for positive, sustainable, sensible and very balanced outcomes.

I turn now to the Reserves Bill 2024. The new conservation park in the Shire of Wandering will be another important addition to the conservation estate. It is located approximately 15 kilometres north-east of Boddington, and it is proposed that 3 211 hectares of wandoo and northern jarrah forest will be protected as a class A reserve. Surrounded by cleared land, this new conservation park is really essential as a stepping stone halfway between Dwellingup state forest to the west and the new Dryandra National Park to the east. It is very important. It is in an area where, historically, there has been extensive clearing, so it is good to be able to link those areas of native vegetation. It will also help ensure the protection of precious biodiversity within remnant vegetation, including forest types that are under-represented in the conservation reserve system; species and ecosystems at the edge of their distributions; two species of threatened birds, Baudin's black-cockatoo and Carnaby's black-cockatoo; and threatened mammal species, such as the chuditch.

When we reflect on the Cook Labor government's achievements, we see that there is a strong history of providing increased protection for our south west native forest. We remember that more than 20 years ago, in 2001, the Gallop Labor government protected our old-growth forest and that in 2021, the McGowan Labor government made the historic move to end large-scale commercial logging under the forest management plan 2024–2033. Those are wonderful achievements by this government and previous Labor governments and previous Ministers for Environment.

We were one of the first states in Australia to announce an end to commercial logging of native forest. Other states are now moving our way, but we were one of the first. This decision will protect nearly two million hectares of native karri, jarrah and wandoo forest for future generations. Under our forest management plan, we have committed to a \$67 million investment, which will create 65 new jobs and other opportunities. Our south west native forest will be managed for its health and resilience, rather than for harvesting on commercial terms. Existing reserve proposals from previous forest management plans are yet to be progressed, and a further 400 000 hectares of jarrah, karri and wandoo forest will be preserved under the new forest management plan.

Today, through this bill, our government continues to value and protect our south west native forest, just like we are doing all around the state through our Plan for Our Parks initiative. The bill also builds on our previous Reserves Act 2023 to elevate part of Lane Poole Reserve in Dwellingup to a national park. Members may know Lane Poole Reserve. The members for Murray–Wellington and Warren–Blackwood are great fans of this area. I have been a constant visitor over the years. I think the former Premier loved it and used to set up his tent down there. I have had many a visit and overnight stay. I think many kids from our primary schools have gone down there. It is a tradition and a rite of passage to go down to Dwellingup, Lane Poole or one of the other park campsites.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Bob’s Crossing.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Bob’s Crossing. I go to Lane Poole. I also make it a point that when I leave Dwellingup, I go to the Blue Wren Cafe for a sausage roll or pie. You cannot do better than the Blue Wren Cafe in Dwellingup.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I’ve seen you gorging yourself. I always come after and there are no sausage rolls left.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Absolutely. That is true. The minister has to be early or he will miss out.

Ms M.M. Quirk: The early bird catches the sausage roll!

Mr R.R. WHITBY: That is right. I want to thank the member for Murray–Wellington for her advocacy to see greater protection for parts of Lane Poole. This year, this house also passed the Conservation and Land Management Amendment Bill 2024. Once passed by the other place, it will further support our policy announced in 2021 to protect Western Australia’s south west native forest and cease large-scale commercial timber harvesting. Through all of these commitments, including this bill, we are creating new class A reserves and parks, including in the Shire of Wandering, and we are committed to protecting the environment now and forever.

I just want to talk for a moment about the opportunities that these extra conservation estates will bring, whether it is a national park or an A class reserve. The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions is full of dedicated people who work very hard to deliver wonderful products and protection for our national park system. I have been involved in the restructuring of the DBCA. We want to put more emphasis on the “A”, which stands for attractions. We know that engaging in their national parks, visiting and camping overnight and getting more opportunities for adventure tourism, ecotourism and Aboriginal cultural tourism are things that people want. Increasingly, people are looking for interesting, vibrant and engaging holidays in their own backyard. That is a key commitment of this government: putting the “A” back into DBCA and making sure that adventure tourism and eco-tourism thrive in Western Australia.

We are seeing examples down in Collie where we have built amazing mountain bike and adventure trails. I know that members were talking about this earlier this morning. It is a fact that mountain bikes are the biggest selling bike in bike shops. It is no longer the road bike or the racing bike; it is the mountain bike.

Mrs L.A. Munday: The e-bike.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: E-bikes are closing in, but mountain bike sales are off the chart. I am told it is now a more popular pastime than surfing, would you believe. Mountain bikes are amazing. They keep people fit. They engage people with the environment and there are amazing adventure trails and mountain bike tracks in Collie that are built and engineered superbly. They are not just dirt tracks through the bush; they are engineered with rocks and supports, and they are incredible. People have to be careful with how they use them because if they come off them at a great speed, they will be injured. Some people have gone through that.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I hope you don’t ride with a sausage roll in your hand when you’re doing it.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Always make sure to stop for a sausage roll at the end of the journey, not at the beginning.

It is also important to note the high quality of national park infrastructure. The planning, engineering, design and finished look is so impressive. I have to acknowledge the work of the DBCA in this. It is wherever we go across Western Australia, whether it is the Skywalk in Kalbarri or down at The Gap in Albany where we are providing a new ablution block and a car park. I have to say that I do not often rave about ablution blocks, but it has to be seen to be believed. It has an architectural design to blend in with the rocks around The Gap down in Albany. It looks like a futuristic mid-century home that someone would want to move into! It is sensational. It will have some of the best views of any ablution block in the country. I urge people who are on their mountain bike, have had their sausage roll and are in the area to visit the ablution block at The Gap and enjoy the very best that Western Australia has to offer.

We have seen the result that this type of investment has had. In Ningaloo Marine Park, we have seen the amazing opportunities that come when we create a marine park and make the investment: businesses, tourists and visitors follow. I remember being on a boat up in Ningaloo about a year ago. A young family had committed what I thought was an extraordinary investment in a charter boat because they had such faith in the marine park and in the way it protects and preserves the environment. They made an investment of \$1.4 million in this very substantial boat. It was not a huge launch. It did not have lots of cabin space. It had a big outboard. It was a big sort of open boat, but it was an impressive and expensive bit of kit. That was the trust and faith that this person had in our marine park to make that huge investment and to take that chance and opportunity. They know that when we create national parks, they are valued, they come with a premium brand and people want to visit and engage with them. We also know that when members of the public visit our national parks, they learn about the environment, become more educated and appreciate the need to protect the natural environment because they are so impressed by it. The more people who visit, engage with and enjoy our national parks to swim, run, fish and do all those things when it is appropriate to do so, the more people who will want to be supporters and protectors of our wonderful, unique Western Australian environment.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Your park hosts are excellent too.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: I should actually mention them. They are great volunteers. I remember when I was up north at Karijini National Park a number of years ago now before my current role. I was an ordinary member of the public enjoying the campsite there. I have to say that the volunteers are amazing. I meet them all the time. They are often retired folk who spend months at a time in areas right across Western Australia. It is a voluntary role, but they love showing off Western Australia. They work hard and they engage with the community and the visitors there and they are great ambassadors for this state. They meet people from all around the world and they love the environment. I think many people would be surprised to know that it is a voluntary role, but they also get benefits. They get benefits to live and retire in a sensational part of Western Australia. They get to enjoy the environment as the visitors do and they get to share their love and passion for our environment with visitors.

Mr D.A. Templeman: What about camping with custodians? That's a good gig.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: This is the amazing potential we have in Western Australia. We know that our Indigenous communities have a passion for their country, and they do not want to keep it to themselves. They want to share their knowledge and experience and let people know why they have their Dreamtime stories and their songlines. I have found that there is no-one prouder of their culture than a traditional owner who wants to share it. That is another great opportunity.

I want to go back to our last budget. The Minister for Tourism and Treasurer made a great point in allocating what I thought was a substantial amount of money—\$160 million plus—to what we have colloquially termed the “BCF initiative” in our state budget. The BCF initiative is for boaters, campers and fishers. This is a very important part of our vision to get more people into our national parks to enjoy the great outdoors. It is money being spent on new campsites and boating facilities to open up new opportunities to access our national parks and marine parks. This budget delivered in spades for boaties, fishers and people who love to get out and camp. It is a major focus that the tourism minister and I are working together on. People want to be able to visit their own state and engage. The COVID pandemic meant that we were forced to look at our own backyard, but when we saw what was there, we were amazed, and those visitations have continued to grow. We had record visitation to our national parks and Rottnest Island during the last financial year. Incidentally, we had record visitation to Perth Zoo and Kings Park. It is not just visitors from overseas and interstate; it is Western Australians who are grasping the opportunity to enjoy and engage with our wonderful natural environment. They are getting out there and enjoying it.

The bill is to be commended. It is included with all the other initiatives that we as a government are putting forward to let people know how good Western Australia's natural environment is and how important it is to get out and about—get kids off their screens and get people camping under the stars. We know that there are many fishers, boaters and campers, and we are delivering for them. Thank you very much.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr D.A. Templeman (Leader of the House)**.

KEYSTART BILL 2024

Returned

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 3.21 pm
