

REGIONS — ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION

Motion

HON COLIN de GRUSSA (Agricultural — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [10.04 am] — without notice:
I move —

That the Legislative Council —

- (a) acknowledges and commends the invaluable contributions of regional Western Australians to the state's economy and society;
- (b) expresses gratitude to the hardworking individuals in regional communities who play a vital role in our state's prosperity;
- (c) condemns the state and federal Labor governments for their attacks on fishing, agriculture and forestry as well as failures in regional health care and housing, which are negatively impacting regional Western Australians; and
- (d) affirms its commitment to advocating for policies that prioritise and support the interests of all Western Australians, regardless of geography.

Before I begin debate on the motion, I pause for a moment to reflect on last night's football game. I am sure that, like me, many members also watched that game intently. I am particularly proud of the Matildas. They are in the top four—probably even top three—in the world. That is a monumental achievement for football. It is the only game that can be called football since it is the only game in which players cannot use their hands. I am very proud of the legacy the Matildas have left sport in Australia and in particular for women's sport. I am sure everyone would agree that that strike of Sam Kerr's in the sixty-third minute was the best strike of a football they have ever seen. It was as good as you get at any level in any competition anywhere in the world, male or female.

I take this opportunity to say, "Well done, Matildas." Let us go for bronze now!

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon COLIN de GRUSSA: I move to the motion. The motion is about acknowledging and expressing gratitude to the hardworking individuals in regional Western Australia who make an invaluable contribution to Western Australian society. Members will be well aware that Western Australia is a powerhouse economically. We are the engine room of the nation and a huge proportion of that economic power is delivered by regional people and regional businesses. Half of Australia's goods exports come out of Western Australia each year, be that minerals and petroleum, agriculture base or whatever. We are a huge export powerhouse, a global leader in mining and petroleum sectors, which is recognised worldwide. We have very strong competitive advantages over other nations. We are a very stable country to do business with. For example, lithium is an incredibly important mineral in the modern world in the transition to clean energy, and Western Australia accounts for about 57 per cent of global production. That is a huge achievement for Western Australia. It is because of those men and women in Western Australia who work in our regional areas to produce the exports that make us such a global powerhouse.

Interestingly, we are becoming a powerhouse in the area of critical minerals, which are incredibly important as part of that energy transition, with a seven per cent share of nickel on a global basis, six per cent of manganese, six per cent of rare earths and three per cent of cobalt. Forty per cent of Australia's barley, 36 per cent of Australia's wheat and 43 per cent of Australia's canola exports also come out of Western Australia. We are a powerhouse in the production of mineral and agricultural resources.

Western Australia is also a powerhouse as a tourism destination and a wonderful place for people to visit and tour around. All those people in the regions make an invaluable contribution. I am personally very grateful for all those who work in our regional areas and who help to cement our place as a powerhouse that produces those products. I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all the people in the regions who contribute to the state's bottom line through their hard work and commitment.

I move on to limb (c) of the motion, which I am sure is the most interesting part for members opposite—that is, the continued attacks by the Labor government, both state and federal, on many of those industries. Incredibly, we see those attacks on fishing, agriculture and forestry.

Hon Kyle McGinn interjected.

Hon COLIN de GRUSSA: It is Thursday, so I will forgive members for their interjections.

What is really important here is these attacks and the effect they have on the people of Western Australia, a powerhouse economy.

Hon Colin De Grussa; Hon Martin Aldridge; Hon Steve Martin; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Jackie Jarvis; Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Peter Collier; Hon Kyle McGinn

Several members interjected.

Hon COLIN de GRUSSA: A powerhouse economy, honourable member. It is a great word.

Hon Darren West: Could you spell it?

Hon COLIN de GRUSSA: I probably could spell it. President, the unruly interjections are distracting me somewhat.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Order, member.

Hon COLIN de GRUSSA: Our powerhouse economy very much does not need these attacks on industries in our regional areas.

I want to draw members' attention to attacks on a number of important sectors. Let us not forget the failed proposal to nationalise the lobster industry and the attacks on our charter fishing operators and the demersal fishery. Let us not forget marine parks that are being created all over the place without proper consideration of the impacts on those communities. I am not against marine parks, but we have to consider the impacts on the communities that they affect. I do not think this government has done that to any great level at all. It is important that we also talk about the effect of the federal government's proposed phase-out of live export as well. On that, I turn to an article from ABC online news that appeared on 15 August, just two days ago. It reports that mental health support services in regional areas in Western Australia have reported an increase in the number of people reaching out for help as stress increases on farms. The article goes on to say —

Western Australian farmers have seen new challenges added to existing pressures —

We all know that farming can be a very stressful industry —

in the past 12 months, according to Wheatbelt Rural Aid counsellor Roger Hitchcock.

He said the concerns included the promised phase-out of live sheep export among other legislation and the rising cost of production.

Cost of production is always a challenge for farmers to manage. Further on in this article we are introduced to Lake Grace farmer Shane Carruthers who said that he noticed more people in his community struggling with their mental health. He goes on to say —

... mental health had been a long-term issue in regional areas, but political moves such as the planned phase-out of live export ... exacerbated the problem.

“It's not a good thing and mental health in the community is paramount,” he said.

I am sure we would all agree with that. He continues —

“I just hope the government sees a bit of common sense and realises what they're doing to these country communities and the welfare of the people.”

I think that is the really important piece in this puzzle: the impact on the people and the communities themselves. It may well be fine for an agency or a minister to sit in their ivory tower and make decisions, but when all those decisions come together and impact one community or a particular sector more than others, what consideration is given to the impact on those individuals and the pressures it puts on them? It is unacceptable if we end up in a situation in which individuals in those communities and their mental health are so adversely affected.

Let us talk a little about marine parks. The proposed south coast marine park has been very topical. It has been a train wreck from the start to where we are now. That is largely because of a failed consultation process that did not consult properly with the community and certainly did not listen to the community's views.

Hon Martin Aldridge interjected.

Hon COLIN de GRUSSA: As my colleague Hon Martin Aldridge points out, that sounds familiar because it is par for the course for this government to not properly consult with communities. Proper consultation is something that it appears unable to do. The mental health concerns of fishers and the potential impacts on them were raised early on in consultation with members of the community reference committee. Of course, it all depends on the final indicative management plans when they are released and what impact that will have on the fishers. It is safe to say that, from what I understand from people I have spoken to and met with, the potential is for those impacts to be very significant on what is an important industry for the south coast, particularly in communities like Esperance. It will be devastating to see those industries be put under pressure and damaged by a decision that they did not make and was essentially forced upon them. Those communities were not asked whether they wanted marine parks; it was a decision made by government. I recall the first of those community consultation meetings with the former Minister for Environment, Amber-Jade Sanderson. At that point she said to the community, “The question is not whether you are getting a marine park; you are getting one.” The community was never asked, “Do you think a marine park would be

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valuable?” The science does not suggest that a marine park is necessarily needed. However, it is possible for it to coexist with those industries if consultation is done properly and the proposals are developed properly.

I will talk a little about fishing—in particular, the west coast demersal scalefish resource. I do not have an issue with managing a fishery sustainably; however, it comes back to how we interact with the people involved in that fishery. Frankly, sending an email to operators in those areas, particularly tourism operators, that says, “We understand your stress; here is the number for Lifeline”, is not acceptable on any level. It is not acceptable to recognise the serious impacts of those decisions, but then flippantly send an email with the number for Lifeline. Come on! We have to do better than that. We have to properly consult with these people, which means actually understanding what their businesses are, how they operate and how they can potentially pivot to do other things so that the fishery can be maintained sustainably, but not to the point at which it puts those businesses out of business and puts extra pressure on communities. That is not needed. That is certainly what operators have been communicating with me; they are in dire states and have invested in equipment and in their businesses in good faith, believing that they had a sustainable business to continue with. Unfortunately, many of them have been put in a position in which their families are facing incredible pressure as a result of government decisions.

I come back to what limb (c) of this motion is about. It is about the pressure consistently being put on a particular type of business or location of a business. It would appear to those people that the government is telling them that what they are doing is wrong, that they are not allowed to do what they do and that, somehow, those people who are going along doing something perfectly legal and acceptable from a community perspective are suddenly being told that it is not right. That may not be what government thinks, but that is the impression these people get. When we make decisions like this, it is important for all of us to understand what the impact will be on the people. We should look not just at the numbers and do a desktop analysis on the social and economic impact; we need to properly understand what the impact will be on the people, their families and their communities. From where they sit, it certainly looks like this government and the federal government has it in for them. I do not think that is acceptable at all.

I talked a little about socio-economic impacts in my contribution, and this is one of the really important parts of the puzzle that is not well done. In particular, I use the marine park example: no socio-economic impact assessment has been done. I have asked a number of questions about that. A bureaucrat who sits behind a desk in Perth and does a quick analysis is not good enough. The government needs to talk to businesses to understand the impacts and flow-on impacts for the community; that applies to any government decision. Live sheep exports is another good example. The federal decision to ban live sheep exports is a political one; it is not based on an issue with the industry. It is incumbent on the state government and the Minister for Agriculture and Food to advocate for that industry. Instead, only last week, the minister tabled a submission in this place that does not advocate for the export of live sheep and is not in accordance with her words last year —

“I do support live sheep exports it’s an important part of the mix ... I absolutely do,” ...

Clearly, her submission is about shutting down the industry. It does not advocate for the continuation of the industry; rather, it is about the transition. Perhaps the minister needs to correct her position because if she truly supported the industry —

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon Kyle McGinn interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon COLIN de GRUSSA: I make nothing up —

The PRESIDENT: Order! That includes all members.

Hon COLIN de GRUSSA: The words are written in the submission. It advocates for a well-managed transition with a clear direction and sufficient time and resources for adjustment along the whole supply chain. That is not advocating for the continuation of the industry. If the minister were truly advocating for the continuation of the industry, that is what the submission would have said. It does not say that; it says the industry should be transitioned.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Settle. Thank you.

Hon COLIN de GRUSSA: Thank you, President. It is Thursday and it is the will of members to voice their approval or disapproval of comments made by members. I welcome members to stand and contribute to the debate on the motion. I am sure they will.

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The fact is that the submission the minister tabled in this house sets out a road map for the federal government for how it should go about killing off the industry in Western Australia—that is what it does. It tells the federal government how the industry can best transition. It does not advocate for the continuation of the industry. Those government decisions are creating the mental health issue that farmers, fishers and others are reporting, certainly to me. Those decisions need to be reflected upon. If we are all proud of the work that our men and women in regional Western Australia do to support our economy, in turn, we need to return that support. If the government decides to close a sector or change what is done in a community, it needs to understand what impacts that decision will have and put the services and support in place before it makes those decisions, rather than flippantly sending people emails that read, “Here’s the number for Lifeline.”

Limb (d) of the motion is self-explanatory. I certainly support policies that are in the interests of all Western Australians and in which geography is irrelevant. That is right across the board, whether that be in agriculture, fisheries, education or whatever. The government must make sure that it does not discriminate based on geography. When the government makes a policy decision that will have an impact more broadly across a regional area or any one particular area, it must understand what those impacts will be, the effect that decision will have on people within those communities and how it might better manage those decisions and communicate the things that it will do in those communities so that we do not see those outcomes and a disproportionate effect on communities outside metropolitan Perth. It is incumbent upon all of us to do that when we make those decisions and it is incumbent on the government to listen.

Hon Kyle McGinn interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Interjections are one thing, but constant mumbling is another. Hon Colin de Grussa.

Hon COLIN de GRUSSA: Thank you, President. It is incumbent upon governments to properly engage with communities, understand the effect that their decisions will have on communities and individuals and make sure that they do not damage the economic powerhouse of our state and nation.

Hon Kyle McGinn interjected.

Hon COLIN de GRUSSA: Hon Kyle McGinn does not agree with me that we are an economic powerhouse.

Hon Kyle McGinn: No, it’s because your zinger word today, member, is “powerhouse”.

Hon COLIN de GRUSSA: “Powerhouse” is the word of the day. Sam Kerr was a powerhouse last night. I cannot get the word out of my head. That is the word of the day and, on that note, I will leave my contribution there.

The PRESIDENT: The question is the motion be agreed. Hon Martin Aldridge.

Several members interjected.

HON MARTIN ALDRIDGE (Agricultural) [10.25 am]: Thank you, President; and I thank you for the support I am getting from the other side of the chamber. I rise to welcome the excellent motion moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—so excellent, President, I think the house should contemplate suspending standing orders to bring the motion to a vote, because it is something that all members of the chamber can get behind. In this new era of humility and humbleness from a government that is prepared to listen, it could stretch and support this excellent motion.

I draw members’ attention to an article in *The West Australian* on 9 August, which is headlined “We got it wrong on heritage”. The article is an opinion piece by Premier Roger Cook, and states —

Good governments demonstrate humility, use common sense and listen to the people. And under my leadership, that is exactly what this Government has done.

I go back a week to another *The West Australian* article dated 27 July, with the headline “I’m not Cooked”. That is quite a headline. It reads —

After Housing Minister John Carey revealed on Tuesday that Mr Cook had “stressed” to his frontbench to be “humble”, Finance Minister Sue Ellery added to the impression the poll dominated Cabinet discussions on Monday.

“Premier Cook has made his position really clear: we are not an arrogant Government,” Ms Ellery said on Wednesday.

“We are not to present as an arrogant Government. You know, we need to be really humble.

It is one thing to be humble or present as humble, but we now have a situation in which the Premier is so humble that today he is too busy for the Parliament of Western Australia; rather, he is at the Labor Party conference in Brisbane. It will be very interesting to see, on behalf of all Western Australians, how the Premier might be advancing with his Labor Party colleagues on the floor of that conference issues such as live sheep export, which

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the Deputy Leader of the Opposition mentioned today, instead of being here for Parliament. Again, we saw some humbleness last week when the mother of the house, Hon Kate Doust, moved a very good motion about cybersecurity, and yesterday there was another good government motion about sport. However, it appears that we reverting back to form with the motion that is foreshadowed for private members' business today because, again, it is about the government going back to congratulating the government. That is not exactly an example of humbleness and humility.

The government keeps repeating the phrase and purporting to be a government for all Western Australians—a government that will deliver for all Western Australians, but the reality could not be farther from those sayings. The government's regional development agenda is dismal; it has shut down, cost shifted and centralised royalties for regions. People have to look up the name of the Minister for Regional Development. The Minister for Regional Development does not leave the coastal plains between Perth and Bunbury. This morning, because I wanted to make sure that I did not mislead the house, I had to look up who is in charge of regional development in Western Australia. I thought it was Hon Don Punch, MLA. I jumped on the minister's Facebook page. I assume I got the right page because it had a blue tick and appears to have official status with Facebook. The profile on the page states that Hon Don Punch, MLA, is the member for Bunbury and the Minister for Disability Services; Fisheries; Seniors and Ageing. I am not sure who is the Minister for Regional Development and the Minister for Volunteering because, according to the minister's official Facebook page, it is not him. Somehow, either we have dropped these important portfolios in the middle of the night or the government realised that its performance, particularly in regional development, is so bad it does not even want to acknowledge who the Minister for Regional Development is anymore.

Hon Sue Ellery: You can actually do better if you're relying on a Facebook post to prosecute your argument.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: I still have five minutes, Leader of the House.

Of course, this is the government that is delivering for all Western Australians, which has just moved the department of regional development. It had the opportunity to make a decision to decentralise but will move to swanky new offices in the Perth CBD, complete with taxpayer-funded hair straighteners. I cannot make this stuff up. These are the investment priorities of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. It was not only to relocate its bureaucracy to the CBD but also to put taxpayer-funded hair straighteners in the bathrooms.

If members look at this motion, there is far too much to canvass in 10 minutes. Regional health care is one of the areas I want to consider in the time I have remaining. The government says it is delivering for all Western Australians, but there is a significant divide between those people who live in the metropolitan area and those who do not even live that far from Perth. There are too many cases to go through, but one we have discovered of late is in a town that the Labor government likes talking a lot about—Collie. The government, in its hospital blitz, announced it was going to fund \$1 million to redevelop the nursing quarters in Collie. We have now found out that the government has completely walked away from that commitment, saying it has run out of money. It underestimated how much things were going to cost and re-prioritised the money. The nursing quarters in Collie are no longer a priority. We asked a question last week about what impact this would have. There are 18 staff—a number way bigger than I thought was going to be the case. There are 18 staff at Collie Hospital now being housed in hotels, motels and short-stay accommodation. That is something to be proud about, members of the government. This is during a housing crisis. Think about the impact that is having on a regional community where, effectively, temporary or short-stay accommodation is being occupied on a permanent basis by public servants. How appropriate is accommodation for health professionals staying for the medium to long-term in short-stay accommodation? This is because the government will not spend \$1 million on accommodation facilities at Collie Hospital. We get answers like this all the time from government members.

They say costs are escalating, there are supply shortages and the cost of doing business is higher. This is at the same time that the government's election commitment to build another pedestrian bridge across the Swan River went from \$50 million to \$100 million—it doubled!—and no-one blinked. The government just wrote another cheque for \$50 million. That is not to mention the Metronet blowouts. These projects are sacrosanct. They cannot be stopped, touched or slowed down. When it comes to providing accommodation in Collie, probably one of the only regional towns that Labor has an interest in, \$1 million is too much. It has been scrapped. The project has gone and nurses are in hotels or motels. We then come to this place and the other place and debate how more people can be attracted to the nursing profession. The debate was about how more nurses could be attracted to regional Western Australia. I tell members what, putting them up in hotels and motels as a solution is probably not conducive to attracting health professionals to work in regional Western Australia.

We are not talking about Wyndham where the government has shut the hospital. It now only operates a daylight service when it used to be open 24/7. The government shut the hospital because it cannot get staff. We are not talking about Carnarvon where we are still telling expectant mothers to go to Perth. There is actually a case now in which one mother has been told she cannot even deliver in Perth; she has to go to Bunbury because no beds are available in Perth or Geraldton. That is really something to be proud of, members of the government. I am sure

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members opposite might contemplate this when they get to their back-slapping motion today in private members' business about diversifying the economy and doing more. I hope they contemplate not just these two examples I have given, but the many more examples, whether they be in Geraldton, Tom Price or Mullewa. There are too many to list. I hope they reflect on their record and their commitment to delivering for all Western Australians.

HON STEVE MARTIN (Agricultural) [10.35 am]: I rise to make a contribution to the outstanding motion by my colleague Hon Colin de Grussa. Members opposite have been unusually subdued for a Thursday. Even Hon Kyle McGinn's heart is not in it this morning. It is half-hearted at best from members opposite. I think that might be because they realise there is more than a grain of truth in the excellent motion that has been put forward. They are not flying in regional Western Australia and they know it. They know that if they turn up at the moment, they are not popular, whether it is on the live sheep trade, forestry or the Aboriginal cultural heritage laws, on which they have said, "Everything's going smoothly. Hang on; it's not!" They are not popular on a number of issues. This is an outstanding motion and it is very timely. I will take a little bit of time to discuss one of the legs of this motion.

It is nearly two years since the decision by former Premier McGowan to shut down the forestry industry in the native forestry sector. We talk about consultation. Workers were told the morning of the decision that those generational small businesses were gone—dead and buried. It was overnight. The government did not take it to the election in 2021. It did not consult with the sector but shut it down. The government put in place a transition package. It is lovely terminology, the "transition package". It is nearly two years since that was announced. How are we going? How are we transitioning out of the hardwood sector? How are those small businesses travelling? How are those communities going? How many new industries have been created in that transition package? How many new jobs are there? I guess in three or four years, when we look back at the dust of what is left of that industry, it might be an interesting PhD for someone to look at how the transition package worked.

I will concentrate on one very small part of the timber industry: furniture manufacturing businesses in Western Australia. It is a very niche but wonderful industry sector. It produces some outstanding gear that is sold around the nation and around the world. It is well known. Our jarrah furniture is a well-known Western Australian product. Those businesses do not have contracts with the forestry sector. They have been handed whatever is left, basically. Those businesses were obviously very concerned about their future going forward after that forestry decision. They are limping along. They have almost got through to the end of 2023. There is some supply. There is nowhere near what they had been told they would get. Some have been forced to source overseas timber or consider sourcing overseas timber to keep alive the dozens and dozens of jobs, mainly based around suburban Perth in Welshpool and Osborne Park. There are also some businesses in regional Western Australia. The new forest management plan is due to commence in 2024. They have no clarity at all about what is coming. There is no guarantee of supply. No contracts are in place so they can say what their business will look like after the end of this year. We are in the middle of August.

That brings me to another issue. Hon Martin Aldridge raised the fact that our Premier is about to attend the national Labor conference. He should be discussing the live sheep trade. He should be on the floor at that convention moving a motion asking for the entire Labor movement to support the live export of sheep. I am guessing that he probably will not. The decision to ban the live sheep export trade is clearly a federal decision. The ban is having a far-reaching impact across the Western Australian sheep and livestock industries, and the farming industry more broadly, well in advance of it happening. That is obvious to anyone who runs a business. If a government tells a business that it is going to ban that business at some unknown stage in the future, it will have an impact from the second that decision is made. We have seen that impact flow through the Western Australian sheep industry in recent months, so I am concerned about that federal decision. I am also concerned that the transition package we will be handed will be run by the state government, and we have seen what has happened with the forestry transition package. Somehow our state will be given a transition package for the live sheep export industry to run. We know what that will look like. We will be told that the export industry will not be banned immediately and that we will be given 18 months, two and a half years or three years to transition in an orderly manner, to do something else, and a few scraps will be thrown our way.

Hon Martin Aldridge interjected.

Hon STEVE MARTIN: Yes, alternatives such as solar panels, wind farms or hemp, Hon Dr Brian Walker. That will be fine and it will be an orderly transition, but that is absolutely not how industry works. From the second that ban is announced, those businesses will be dealing with the impact. The state transition package will not work; it simply will not work. That is another industry that the Labor government will abandon and leave to its best devices.

I was not going to raise this next matter but Hon Martin Aldridge talked about some of the health impacts in regional Western Australia. He raised one issue in particular that has come to my attention and that is the issue in Collie. Right across regional Western Australia, local shires, through their very small rate bases, are being asked

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by the state government—with a budget of around \$30 billion or a surplus of many billions over the last couple of years—to pay for the accommodation for health services staff. That is extraordinary. The state government is saying to the shires that have a rate base of \$1.5 million, that it cannot quite provide the accommodation or make it work. It is saying, “Would you mind building the accommodation? You can take out the loan and pay it off over 15 years. We will lease it. We might lease it for the length of loan or we might not. We might leave you hanging for the last five years of the loan, but that is okay. Somehow we cannot afford to build that housing.” But the Shires of Wyalkatchem, Trayning, Narrogin and maybe Collie have been asked to foot that bill, which is an extraordinary thing for a state government as wealthy as this one to do. By the way, this is not happening in the suburbs. It is not happening in Armadale, Gosnells, Claremont or Joondalup. Ratepayers in those suburbs are not paying for housing for health services staff. That has been left to regional Western Australians.

In the short time that I have left, I want to mention the first couple of parts of this excellent motion that acknowledges the extraordinary contribution that regional Western Australians make to this state. That is obvious. Anyone in government would be well aware of that from the mining, agriculture, horticulture and fisheries industries et cetera. In my patch alone in the Agricultural Region, more than 50 million tonnes of grain have been produced in the last two years, with another sizable crop coming up, I hope. That is a wonderful contribution. Most of it is exported, which is also important for this country and this state. That task is down to the men and women who work and live in regional Western Australia.

Recently, an interesting opinion piece by Owen Whittle, secretary of UnionsWA, talked about the need for wage rises in the public sector, which is appropriate, but he said that public sector workers had borne the brunt of the COVID pandemic. They certainly dealt with some extra workload. People in regional Western Australia absolutely did not have access to the staff that they needed when our borders were closed. They have had a seriously extra workload in recent years, coupled with those two very large harvests in the broadacre grain sector. Well done to every single one of those small businesses. Farming in this state is, thankfully, still a family business. There is a little bit of the corporate stuff going on, but it is still the family business that is the backbone of regional agriculture. I would like to echo the remarks of my colleagues by thanking them for their excellent work on behalf of the state.

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [10.45 am]: I am happy to support parts (a), (b) and (d) of the motion put by Hon Colin de Grussa.

The PRESIDENT: Leader of the House, are you the —

Hon Dr Steve Thomas interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Excuse me. The one person who should be speaking is the chair. Leader of the House, can you indicate if you are providing the government response?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes, I am. I am happy to support parts (a), (b) and (d), and I will talk about those in a minute. I am the lead speaker on behalf of the government, but I am going to take less than my allowed time because we have here with us the minister for two of the portfolios mentioned in the motion, and we have the excellent Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Fisheries, so he is going to make a contribution as well.

Hon Peter Collier: That is three Labor speakers on non-government business.

Hon SUE ELLERY: What I am trying to explain, honourable member, is that I am going to take less time, and I am hoping that if I take less time, members opposite—but I recognise that it is their motion —

Hon Peter Collier interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon SUE ELLERY: I am actually trying to be helpful because I think it would be useful for members opposite to hear from the minister as well. I would be surprised if they did not want to hear from Hon Kyle McGinn. Anyway, I am going to use less time. Of course we are happy to support parts (a), (b) and (d) of the motion. We are happy to acknowledge and commend the invaluable contributions of regional Western Australians to our economy and society. We are happy to express our gratitude to the hardworking individuals who play a part in that. We are also happy to affirm our commitment to advocating for policies that prioritise and support the interests of all Western Australians, regardless of geography, noting, of course, that we represent most of the regional areas of Western Australia. They are our constituents so of course we are going to support them.

In the few minutes that I want to take, I am going to read from a document titled *WA budget overview 2023–24*. I am happy to table it, but it is available publicly. I want to turn in particular to the bit that summarises our investment in the regions. One of the key parts of that is the reference to the \$4 billion allocated to royalties for regions over the next four years, but the next bit in particular that states that we are making —

a massive \$11.2 billion investment in regional infrastructure, of which only —

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Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! There is too much noise on my left.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Thanks, President —

9 per cent is funded by Royalties for Regions.

What is interesting about that is that if we go back to the last time the other side was in government, in its last budget in 2016–17 its asset investment program allocation was \$6.9 billion—compared with our \$11.2 billion—of which 22 per cent came out of royalties for regions. That is a significant difference and demonstrable evidence of our commitment to regional WA. The overview states that there was a \$342 million increase in spending on regional health and mental health initiatives. I note the commentary by Hon Colin de Grussa. It is right to talk about mental health, which is why we are increasing our spend in mental health in regional WA. An additional investment of \$61.6 million has been put into Government Regional Officers' Housing to support the attraction and retention of public sector workers; \$32.6 million to protect the state's livestock industries, which I am sure the minister will talk about; \$31.3 million for the Buccaneer Archipelago marine parks; \$23.6 million to support the survivors of family and domestic violence in the regions, including the new FDV one-stop hub in Broome; \$20.2 million for a future drought fund, which I am sure the minister will talk about as well; and \$20.7 million for the regional airfare zone cap, which is an incredibly popular and sensible investment in regional WA. In the education and training sector, \$6.8 million has been invested in upgrades for agricultural colleges around the state; \$93.4 million in new and expanded initiatives to support students in the regions to access training, women to enter apprenticeships and non-traditional fields, and for Aboriginal people to gain employment; \$3.5 million for the expansion of the heavy vehicle driving operations training program in the Kimberley and Pilbara. There has been investment in upgrades to Albany High School, Dampier Primary School, Derby District High School, Donnybrook District High School, Eaton Community College, Halls Creek District High School or Roebourne District High School, and continuing investment in schools to ensure facilities continue to improve across the state.

I turn to investment in the wellbeing of Aboriginal people, many of whom live in regional Western Australia: \$42.6 million has been spent over four years for the essential municipal services upgrade to Aboriginal remote communities after the previous federal government vacated the space; \$18.3 million in the South West Aboriginal Medical Service health hub; \$11.8 million for initiatives forming part of the Kimberley Juvenile Justice strategy; \$6 million to establish the Aboriginal community controlled organisation peak body; \$5.8 million to extend the driving access and equity program; \$5.8 million for additional Aboriginal mental health, and the list goes on. There are others who want to contribute to this motion, so I reiterate that I am happy to support limbs 1, 2 and 4, but will not agree to limb 3. I am happy to continue as part of a government that is investing more than has ever been invested before in regional Western Australia, an area we represent very well.

HON JACKIE JARVIS (South West — Minister for Agriculture and Food) [10.52 am]: I thank the opposition for the opportunity to respond, noting that it is non-government business. Given the short time, I will speak firstly about forestry. Some comments were made about native forests. The reality is it was a science-based decision. It is not environmentally, socially or economically viable to continue harvesting our native forests. That is why we put \$80 million into a transition plan. The opposition can criticise it all they like, but the government has provided money to timber mills, displaced workers and harvest and haulage contractors. We supported small businesses through a range of initiatives and funding. We provided funding to community groups through a community program, and we have a major \$10 million new industry fund that is being assessed as we speak. It is clear that those opposite do not believe in the science of climate change and they do not believe we should have got out of native forestry.

I have a number of media releases from Hon Steve Martin, the man who would like to be the next Minister for Forestry in Western Australia. In October he called native forestry "one of the state's most sustainable industries." He said that the government had shut it down despite lacking any scientific evidence. On 10 February, he mentioned "Labor's unscientific and cynical decision to shut down a sustainable regional Western Australian industry." On 22 February, he called it shutting down a sustainable local industry. Most recently, in his July media release, Mr Martin said he is backing the forest industry.

It is clear that the opposition wants to retain logging in native forests. We are 18 months out from an election. I need to hear from the member for Vasse—the woman who wants to be the next Premier of Western Australia—exactly what her position is on native forestry. We say it is no longer sustainable, and with reducing rainfall, it is clear that we cannot keep harvesting our native forests. However, the man who wants to be the next Minister for Forestry is clearly saying, "No, no, it is fine. It is sustainable. Let us keep doing it." I am trying to understand what the Liberal–National Party's plan is for protecting native forests.

From the other questions I get, it is clear that the opposition does not support plantation timbers either, but that is probably a discussion for another day.

In relation to live export, it absolutely beggars belief that I would be criticised for submitting a report to a panel that has been specifically formed to manage the transition. The commonwealth has been very clear that it will phase out live sheep export by sea. I have gone in to bat for WA and I told the federal government what the cost will be to the economy, and I get criticised? I am being criticised for asking for federal money. It absolutely beggars belief that the opposition does not want money from the federal government. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to get funds from the commonwealth to support an industry that will change. It will change—I acknowledge that. It will change the structure of the sheep industry; that is what our report said. Yet the opposition wants to thumb its nose at money for regional communities, farmers, feed lotters, processors, and truck drivers. Why? It is because they want to get more votes. They say, “No, do not give us any money; we want people in the regions to suffer as a result of this decision so we can get a few more votes.” It is unbelievable! Members on our side of the chamber live and work in every sheep-producing region in Western Australia. We care about our communities. We want to make sure this transition is as smooth as possible. I am not above federal law. The opposition knows that, but they criticise me for submitting a report that highlights the economic damage this decision will cause. Get on board team WA. This is absolutely unbelievable!

HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West — Leader of the Opposition) [10.56 am]: It is a Thursday morning, but even for a Thursday morning, I wonder how many free hits the government wants to give me today. Holy mackerel! There were a couple of nice energy announcements this morning when the government said, “Our plan does not work, we have failed again.” That has come out twice today. I was just asked why I was late. I had to go and reinforce the fact the government had messed this up. Then a motion comes out today saying perhaps the government should look after regional communities a bit better. I love the argument. I mean, I know it is a Thursday, but the government does not have to be too generous. The Leader of the House said she disagrees with some of these things—there are a couple of question marks in there—but in particular, paragraph (c). I think we all agree with (a), (b) and (d).

Hon Sue Ellery: You didn’t listen to what I said.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I did listen to what you said, very carefully and quietly.

There are a couple of issues in the third paragraph. The first part condemns the state and federal government for its failures in regional health care and housing. The only issue I have with that is that failures in health care and housing are not restricted to regional areas. There are significant failures across the entire breadth of Western Australia, including the 80 per cent of people who live in the metropolitan area. I think Hon Colin de Grussa was being a bit generous, by letting the government off for the 80 per cent that it is not doing a particularly good job for in the metropolitan area. The contribution from the Minister for Forestry was particularly interesting because she started by saying that her response to the forestry sector was based on science, but then the first thing she came out with was social parameters. Either it is based on science or it is based socially.

Hon Jackie Jarvis: Environmentally, socially and economically. Environmentally was first.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: No, no, no. The issue with this government is that most of what it does in regional areas is very much based around votes rather than around the outcomes for regional Western Australia.

Several members interjected.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Why did it shut it down? This is very important.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I thank the Deputy President for your protection. This is very important. The timber industry could have been made sustainable. I have been involved in this since 1990s, and I have said repeatedly and publicly that the trajectory that it was on was not necessarily sustainable. I have always called for it to be put on a sustainable trajectory—it could have been. This is where the science that the minister referred to is important. The timber industry could have been a long-term sustainable industry based on a harvest that was sent on a longer time frame, turnover and harvest interval. A sustainable industry could have been built, but it would not have placated the Greens in Fremantle and the votes that the Labor Party wanted to pick up.

Hon Jackie Jarvis: Is that your policy? Returning to sustainable native logging?

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I would love to see a return to a sustainable timber industry. That would actually allow us to harvest some timber. Instead, the Labor Party killed the industry. It killed it, not because it could not make it sustainable—it would have been hard and there would have been people exiting the industry needing compensation packages—but all of that was deliverable and could have been done. We might have actually even supported the government with it! I might have had to say “Yes, we have to drop the harvest because we have to set it at a sustainable level”. However, the government did not apply a triple bottom line or social, economic and

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environmental outcomes. As a party, Labor said “There are no votes for us in Manjimup and not many in Nannup, so we can crucify those communities. We can kill them off, because all the votes —

Hon Jackie Jarvis: The member for Warren–Blackwood will hold that seat.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Let us see. There will be a nice battle; I am looking forward to that. I have a lot of respect for the member for Warren–Blackwood. I think she works very hard. We were together at the Nannup Garden and Flower Festival on Friday night. She goes to a lot of functions and is very active. I like a challenge. She is going to be one that we will have to work very hard to unseat. Having said those nice things might cruel the preselection, but anyway.

The government had the opportunity to deliver a sustainable long-term forest industry and it chose to kill it off for completely political reasons. The motion before the house is actually a very good one. One of the other things the government did was before the last election. On numerous occasions, members said that they were not interested in removing the representation of regional Western Australia. The then Premier was repeatedly asked about it, particularly down in Albany—but not only in that area of the south west. He was asked “Are you going to shaft country Western Australians? Is that your policy?” He said “No, we are not considering it. It is not on our agenda”. He was asked “Are you going to damage Western Australians’ representation if they live outside the metropolitan area?” and he said “It is not in our agenda”. Then, holy mackerel! The Labor Party had a landslide victory and it was suddenly on the agenda. There is a reason it hit the top of the list and was the first bit out there. That was because this government saw an opportunity to enhance its power and extend its political influence at the expense of regional Western Australia. That is exactly what it did. It is incredibly difficult to read anything else into this. The government was absolutely happy to destroy the representation of Western Australia. In a horrible, cynical backstabbing of the regional people of Western Australia, the government was happy to use its advantage. Obviously, Labor Party wants to protect its margins in all those places like Fremantle.

Hon Kyle McGinn: Are you the next member for O’Connor?

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: No. I can guarantee that. I am not sure what the member’s obsession is with O’Connor. Where is Hon Kyle McGinn going to be on the upper house ticket? Perhaps the powerbrokers in the ministry can tell us where he will sit on the upper house ticket. I might even come to give Hon Kyle McGinn a plug! Coming out of the regional area, he might be wanted, but he also might be endangered. I am very interested to see where Hon Kyle McGinn will sit. He is the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Regional Development. That is very important. Let us see where Hon Kyle McGinn will sit in a party that has shown its contempt for regional Western Australia. It has done that at a state and federal level. We have seen the performance of the government firsthand. Where was most of the impact of the debacle that was the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act going to be? In regional areas. Where is effectively all the impact of the changes to the forestry industry? In regional areas. Where will the impact of the decisions of the government’s federal colleagues hit? I have a bit of sympathy for the state Minister for Agriculture and Food. At least she has been able to say some positive comments about the live sheep export trade. However, her federal colleagues have snubbed her and thrown her under the bus on this one!

Hon Darren West: You do remember who stuffed it up?

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: There are a few buses that Hon Darren West has been thrown under in the last two weeks. I suggest that he should walk out onto Harvest Terrace very carefully, and be careful of any bus. Luckily, the government has been closing down buses a bit. The Collie bus is looking a bit dodgy. That might make Hon Darren West safer when he goes out to regional areas. At least he will not have any more Aboriginal cultural heritage meetings to go to. He will not have to check for buses outside. His party has thrown him under the bus.

It has also thrown Hon Kyle McGinn under the bus, who told me that he attended some Aboriginal cultural heritage meetings as well. I apologise for last week; I did not see him at the meetings. I am happy to give him the credit that he did go. Well done. It is important that he brought it up, but he told regional Western Australia that his party was happy to get rid of its representation and damage its industries. The member is happy to talk about the industries that have come knocking on the Labor Party’s door. He is very good at talking about oil and gas and mining—as so he should be. That is where the government’s surpluses come from. He should be on bended knee thanking the mining industry for its surpluses. The government is propped up by the mining industry, not its economic management. The mining industry propped it up during the biggest boom that this state had ever seen since February 2019. It still goes on today—iron ore is \$US104 a tonne. Thank you very much, mining sector! Yes, we support it.

Luckily for Hon Kyle McGinn, so many of the people in the mining industry are fly-in fly-out, so he does not have to explain to them why they would have been shafted if they were living locally. It is no wonder that the Labor Party is so desperate to keep the vote propped up in metropolitan Western Australia. It has no interest in what happens out in the regions, except for a couple of patches.

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I will finish with this: the compensation of the timber industry helps a tiny bit. How about the government match the Collie compensation for coal down to Manjimup?

HON PETER COLLIER (North Metropolitan) [11.06 am]: I stand to make a few comments, particularly on part (d) of the motion. I thank Hon Colin de Grussa for bringing this motion to the house. The area that I would like to look at is specific to my shadow portfolio of police, and that is law and order. I will do it in a very generic sense across the state, but with specific regard to regional Western Australia. The most contemporary statistics on crime in the regions are stark. They present an extraordinarily challenging yet scary picture for regional Western Australia in terms of law and order.

As a house, it is important that we regularly affirm our commitment to abrogating the policies that prioritise the interests of all Western Australians. Western Australia is a geographically very unique state. It is evidently the largest in the nation.

Hon Darren West: No shit.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I beg your pardon?

Hon Darren West: It is the bleeding obvious, member. Thank you.

Hon PETER COLLIER: It is the language that concerned me. I am surprised that it went through, to be completely honest. Anyway, it will be in *Hansard*.

Western Australia needs special representation in those regions. Of course, that will not be there after the next election. The needs in the Kimberley and Pilbara are decidedly different from those of the metropolitan area, and likewise, those in the south west are different from the midwest and the eastern goldfields. With that in mind, we need to understand that the challenges in regional Western Australia vastly exceed those in the metropolitan areas. So many areas have already been identified and articulated by previous speakers. There are different challenges in areas like housing, health and education, and principally, law and order. Unfortunately, a lot of country towns in Western Australia do not have the luxury of a police station. All they might have, if they are lucky, is a roving police officer. If members are thinking for a moment that the methamphetamine scourge is exclusive to the metropolitan area, they are living in a dream world. It is not that way. Crime, particularly in the Kimberley area of Western Australia, and in the eastern goldfields and Carnarvon, is out of control. We have the extraordinary situation in which there is a TikTok page in the north of our state called “Don’t stop till you kill a cop”. That is exactly right. That is what our police have to deal with in the Kimberley on a daily basis. We have these young kids out there ramming police cars on a daily basis. We have businesses too scared to open their doors after six o’clock at night because they do not have sufficient police protection in those country towns.

I am not just standing here making this up. I draw members’ attention to the Western Australia Police Force website and the crime statistics that came out last week. They are absolutely horrific. Across Western Australia, 271 856 crimes were reported during the last financial year, which was higher than the previous three years, and reported crime across the state was 12 865 offences above the five-year average. Anyone who suggests that crime is not an issue needs a dose of reality. But, and this brings me back to my point, the most significant thing that is particularly pertinent to today’s motion is that the worst crime was in the regions. Let me tell members that crime in the regions is the worst on record. The worst crime statistics since records have been taken in Western Australia occurred over the last quarter. Over the last financial year, regional WA recorded 73 948 offences. That is higher than any time that records have been taken in the history of Western Australia. Crime in Carnarvon is up by 42 per cent, Kununurra is up 33 per cent and Broome is up 9.1 per cent. That is, of course, from the very high base. Crime in Karratha is up by 19 per cent, Kalgoorlie is up 20 per cent, Northam is up 22 per cent, Busselton is up 27 per cent, Bunbury is up 34 per cent and Collie is up 31 per cent.

As I have said, it is not exclusive. Crime across the board has increased, but it is out of control in the regions. Why is crime out of control in the regions? It is because there is a parlous shortage of police officers in Western Australia. In fact, we are 182 police officers short in Western Australia. Do members know where 110 of them are? They are in regional Western Australia. Out of 182 police officers across the state, 110 come from regional Western Australia; that is, there is an allocation of another 110 police officers in Western Australia and they cannot fill them. Do members know why they cannot fill them? We keep hearing about these wonderful recruitment campaigns, and they are, and I applaud the government for giving it a crack. I go to pretty much every graduation ceremony. But there is no point in bringing them in at one end if they are going out the other end at a faster rate. Do members know how many resignations we had in Western Australia last year? We had 473. Do members know what the average is? It is 150. We had 473 police officers leave the force last year. Just recently, the Minister for Police said that that has slowed down, it is an aberration, it is across the board, and it is global et cetera. Guess what? Up until 30 June this year, 202 officers resigned. To me, that is not a slowing down. To the end of June, 202 officers resigned. That is already above the average and we are only up to 30 June. As the minister says, “It is entirely attributable to other opportunities.” Can I say to the minister and the government: sorry, but you are wrong. They need to go out there

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and they need to talk to police officers. They need to talk to people who are intimately involved with the police force and understand that there is an issue. When we have members of the hierarchy of WA police having a kill list for people they do not like within the force, we have an issue. When we have the government blindly ignoring the fact that a switch-off clause would be an innocuous, bleeding obvious and practical improvement in police work conditions, we have a problem.

Police now, in contemporary society, are dealing with a much more complex society than they have ever dealt with before. The meth scourge is extraordinary, and the problems that that creates in terms of crime is unacceptable. Why on earth can the government not just say, “We will adhere to the union call for a switch-off clause,” so when police finish their shifts, they can switch off for a time and refresh for work the next day?

One of the biggest issues that the crime statistics showed, in the last quarter in particular, is in family-related offending—that is, domestic violence. There was a 35 per cent increase in the rate of domestic violence. That is at a time when the government has actually reduced the numbers of officers who are committed directly to working in the domestic violence unit. The first answer that I got when I asked this question a week and a half ago was that there were 77.65 officers within that unit, compared with 90 officers two years ago. There was a correction to that answer, which said: no, it was not 77.65 officers; it was 87.65 officers. The minister said that he had made a mistake and he went off and knew it needed to be corrected. I acknowledge that it was a correction, minister, but can I also say that 87.65 is not 90! It still means that we now have two and a half officers fewer dealing directly with domestic violence incidents than we did two years ago. That is what we have.

If the government is going to take domestic violence seriously, and it keeps beating its chest about how many extra police officers it has, surely it can allocate a number of 50 officers to deal with the scourge of domestic violence. In a community where we have a 35 per cent increase in domestic violence incidents over a three-year period, we have an issue. That is not me saying that; they are the government figures. In any stretch of the imagination, 90 always beats 87.65. The government has fewer officers dealing with this terrible situation. We have an issue here with regard to crime in Western Australia, and it is of particular concern in regional Western Australia. All Western Australians deserve to be safe.

HON KYLE MCGINN (Mining and Pastoral — Parliamentary Secretary) [11.17 am]: It is good to get up to respond to some of the outrageous comments that have been made by the opposition today on this motion. The most outrageous comment, I think by far, came from the Leader of the Opposition in this place when he stated that people who work in the mining industry are from metropolitan Western Australia. It must shock the member to know that we have residential workforces out in Kalgoorlie, for example. It is a bit of a slight to say that it does not matter about the voters because they are from metro Perth. When we have some of the biggest representation in regional WA —

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: Check *Hansard*!

Hon KYLE MCGINN: I will check *Hansard*, Leader of the Opposition. How it came across in this chamber was that the Leader of the Opposition was trying to stipulate that we do not have regional workforces that work in the mining industry. I tell the member right now that we do. Absolutely, we do.

I turn to Hon Martin Aldridge who uses his time to study ministers by going on Facebook—unbelievable! He goes on Facebook to find out who a minister is.

Hon Martin Aldridge: I didn’t even know who the minister was!

Hon KYLE MCGINN: That is absolute rubbish that the member did not know who the minister is because Minister Don Punch has been out in the regions doing a fantastic job for regional development. How about the member uses Google instead of Facebook? But he does not check that. Would the member check who he asks his questions to? Hang on! Has he asked a question about regional development in this chamber? Has the member asked a question about regional development? Has he even asked for a briefing from the Minister for Fisheries on the marine park? I find it fascinating that Hon Colin de Grussa comes into this place and makes up rhetoric—like he has been told from Tory—and never even asks for a briefing. He does not even ask for a briefing. We would think that the member who says that he is representing regional WA would have the smarts to ask for a briefing to see what the government is doing. Instead, the member makes up rubbish and talks about it like it is knowledge.

That is what the Nationals WA do here, members; let us be very clear. The National Party makes up rubbish to make us believe it. It does not ask for truth. It does not ask for briefings or the truth of what is happening. Instead it makes up its own narrative because that suits it out in the regions. Hon Jackie Jarvis hit the nail on the head when she said it is better for the National Party members to be out there whingeing about an issue than accepting the funding from the federal government. That is the sort of rubbish we are used to in this chamber, but I thought maybe on

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this Thursday we would see an elevation in the opposition. However, that did not happen. I am very disappointed with that.

Let us talk about what Hon Colin de Grussa raised in the fishing space. I find it fascinating that he has the gall to stand in this chamber and talk about the demersal fishing industry because when the National Party was in government, it did nothing for the sustainability of our fishing industry—not a thing. It promised that it would but Hon Colin de Grussa did what he always does—all talk, no walk. Absolutely that is what the opposition does, and that is what it did with fisheries and what it will continue to do. Luckily, we have a great minister in Hon Don Punch, who is willing to go out there and create a sustainable fishing industry, unlike the previous Liberal–National government, which sat on its hands, whinged about the issue but did not have the gall to go out there and do anything about it. If it had its way, we may end up like South Australia, which had to ban demersal fishing—full stop. If people sit on their hands for too long, Hon Colin de Grussa, nothing happens, except the fishing industry goes to—I will not say that word. That is exactly where it is heading if people sit on their hands and do nothing.

Several members interjected.

Hon KYLE MCGINN: I will say it all day so that Hon Martin Aldridge can get it in his head, because there has not been a question from Hon Martin Aldridge about regional development. How would he know who the minister is when he never questions the minister? He does not say anything. He stands and says rhetoric about going on Facebook. How about the member comes into the chamber and engages with the minister? It would be interesting if that were the case.

Believe it or not, we heard from Hon Colin de Grussa about the rock lobster industry. Let us talk about who is looking after the rock lobster industry after what happened with the exports to China. Let us talk about how the government has worked with and consulted the crayfishing industry through the COVID pandemic and through the challenges that have happened. I love hearing this word “consultation” from the opposition. In my speech I have just spoken about the opposition’s lack of consultation with the government in briefings it is entitled to get. It is astounding that opposition members come in here and talk about consultation.

Look at the process with the Buccaneer Archipelago marine parks. Did any members look at that process and how consultation took place? I can tell members that plenty of consultation took place and there was absolutely consultation in that space. The consultation on the marine park down south is ongoing. That is why I find it hilarious that Hon Colin de Grussa talks about what we are going to do about this and that. The fisheries are going to engage like we engaged on BAMPs and we are going to look at a recovery package in that space. That is exactly what we did with the Buccaneer Archipelago, but it does not suit the narrative of the National Party. If the government is doing well in regional WA, that is not good for the National Party. It cares more about its vote than it cares about regional WA. That is a sad, sad thing for it to bring into this chamber. It constantly runs down the regions. That is exactly what it does. It runs them down and runs them down. The opposition leader is talking about the mining industry not having any locals in regional WA. That is absolute rubbish. It is running down the regions, Hon Colin de Grussa. The powerhouse that is regional WA is getting run down by the National Party.

Several members interjected.

Hon KYLE MCGINN: I know Hon Peter Collier does not like me raising my voice, but I am being interjected on so I have to. I apologise for that, Hon Peter Collier. I will not be supporting this motion. It is typical from the National Party—all talk, no walk.

Motion lapsed, pursuant to standing orders.