

SERVICEWA APP

Statement

HON WILSON TUCKER (Mining and Pastoral) [5.28 pm]: I did not get a chance to speak on the government's motion this morning, so I thought I would give a member's statement. I would like to talk not necessarily about the government assistance payments—enough members talked about that this morning—but how those payments can be claimed using the ServiceWA app. I will borrow a line from the government's website that states —

Families are encouraged to get ready to claim the offer now by downloading the ServiceWA app and setting up their Digital Identity through myGovID.

I am all for adopting digital technology to serve the public interest in the public good, but only if it is done in a secure and safe manner. I do not think that I need to remind members of the broken promise by former Premier Hon Mark McGowan about COVID information that was collected through the SafeWA app. It was promised that it would be used only for COVID-related purposes. Of course, it was not.

We now have a different app, ServiceWA, which is expanding its footprint and capabilities, and offering more services and functionality. I will use an aide-mémoire and refer to my phone. People can use the ServiceWA app to connect to Emergency WA, FishCatchWA, FuelWatch, SharkSmart WA, unclaimed money—I am not sure what that is—and weather stations. These are all good services, and I certainly do not have a problem with them. The part that I do have a problem with is that it has been five years since the consultation was completed on the data privacy legislation governing the public sector, but, since then, we have not had any tangible or real information about when we can expect that legislation to arrive.

I have asked this question multiple times in Parliament. Since 2021, I have asked eight times, to be exact, when we can expect data privacy legislation for the public sector in WA. Western Australia is the only state or territory in Australia that does not have data privacy legislation governing the public sector. I have asked that question eight times to the hardworking Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General, and eight times I have received the same answer, which is basically that it is cabinet-in-confidence, but that does not tell us when we can expect it.

We have one year until this Parliament prorogues and we go to an election, and the Attorney General has had this data privacy legislation sitting on his desk for probably the last 15 years, since the reports about the data leakage in the medical sector raised the need for data privacy legislation in WA. The Attorney General is retiring in one year, and we still do not know when the data privacy legislation will be coming.

As this government expands its digital footprint and offers more services online, which I think it should, we should also get an assurance of when the data privacy legislation will come. It is really about data interoperability, the linkage between different departments and making sure that data is being shared, secured and retained in a consistent, safe and reliable manner. We do not have that assurance. We have seen countless examples of public sector data breaches through apps that the government offers, and we are still waiting for any assurance.

It is not just me asking. It is really the public who wants some clarity, and I think the public deserves it. As the ServiceWA app continues to grow, the footprint and blast radius of the information will expand, and the risk associated with holding, storing and retaining that information will increase. There should be a response. A little bit more clarity would be nice. I will continue to ask the same question, and I hope that next time the answer will be a little bit more fulsome.