



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTIETH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2018

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, 17 May 2018

Legislative Council

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THE PRESIDENT (Hon Kate Doust) took the chair at 10.00 am, read prayers and acknowledged country.

WORLD BEE DAY

Statement by President

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Kate Doust): Members, Sunday, 20 May, is World Bee Day. Last year, the United Nations declared 20 May to be World Bee Day, which aims to raise awareness of the importance of bees and warn about their dwindling numbers.

In 2015, with assistance from the University of Western Australia's Centre for Integrative Bee Research, Parliament House installed three beehives in the outer gardens as part of an initiative to raise awareness of the plight of honey bees in Australia. It is worth noting that we were the first Australian Parliament to host its own hives and our bees continue to thrive and produce honey—around five kilos a month. Due to our vigilant biosecurity controls, ongoing research and some good fortune, our state's honey bees continue to be free of many diseases found in eastern Australia and we have some of the healthiest bees in the world.

Today at Parliament House, we are showing our support for the inaugural World Bee Day and Western Australia's bee industry by showcasing some of the exciting developments in bee research and bee production. I invite you to visit the courtyard between 11.00 am and 2.00 pm today where you will be able to view honey bee products, a see-through working hive, and speak with some knowledgeable beekeepers and researchers about the importance of bee preservation and bee research in Western Australia. There will also be a tour of our own beehives where you can learn more about our very own Parliament House bees. As an added incentive, you can try some honey treats that chef Keith Barker and our catering team have prepared using our delicious Parliament House honey. I encourage all members to attend if you have time today.

LANDFILL — BULLSBROOK

Petition

HON ALANNA CLOHESY (East Metropolitan — Parliamentary Secretary) [10.03 am]: I present a petition containing 1 162 signatures couched in the following terms —

We the undersigned are opposed to the establishment of a landfill operation at Lot 12 Chittering Road Bullsbrook and Lot 1 Jenkins Road Bullsbrook. The proposed development is inappropriate and will negatively impact on the Bullsbrook community's environment, safety and amenity. In particular, the 160 daily truck movements, and the associated dust and noise and landfill operations will have unacceptable negative impacts on road safety on Chittering Road, on our local school, on the environment and on the enjoyment of amenity on the properties on the route, particularly those within the vicinity, those on Hoad Street and those within the buffer zone of the proposed landfill operations. It will impact the safety and popularity of the 'Chittering Valley Tourist Way—Route 359', which is regularly frequented by cyclists, motorcyclists and hikers, as well as interstate and overseas visitors.

The community, and local government, have resoundingly demonstrated our opposition to the proposal. However, state government processes have not appropriately recognised and responded to the wishes of the local community and we have now been forced to continue to oppose this development before the State Administrative Tribunal through mediation on 3 occasions over 18 months. The protracted nature and cost of this process borne by the local government and our community is unjust and unacceptable. We believe these processes are unfair and favour developers and businesses over communities.

We therefore ask the Legislative Council to:

- initiate an inquiry into state government development approval processes which can force local communities to engage in lengthy and inappropriate battles against proposals which have already been resoundingly rejected at local government level, and
- call on the Minister for Planning, the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Local Government to support the Bullsbrook community to ensure development in our community is appropriate and does not impact negatively on our safety, environment and amenity.
- Call on the State Government to ensure that the proposed landfill operations at Lot 1201 Chittering Road Bullsbrook and Lot 1 Jenkins Road Bullsbrook do not go ahead.

And your petitioners as in duty bound, will ever pray.

[See paper 1378.]

Nonconforming Petition

HON ALANNA CLOHESY (East Metropolitan — Parliamentary Secretary) [10.05 am]: In addition, Madam President, I have a further 67 names that were collected in a nonconforming manner via an e-petition.

GERALDTON CAMP SCHOOL — FUNDING*Petition*

HON JIM CHOWN (Agricultural) [10.06 am]: I present a petition containing 801 signatures couched in the following terms —

To the President and Members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia (WA) in Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned vehemently oppose the WA Government's planned funding cuts to the Geraldton Camp School, proposed to commence at the start of the 2019 school year. Geraldton Camp School's site has remained a vital part of our local community and surrounding areas, since beginning as a school in 1913. It helps students develop individual, team and leadership skills, many of which cannot be learned in the classroom alone. The school has undergone significant improvements over the past few years and offers instruction on numerous outdoor and physical activities. It provided educational services to over 2100 students in 2017. School visits made up 82% of client groups in 2017 and community groups generally visit on weekends and in school holidays. A loss of funding would have a devastating effect on these groups.

We therefore ask the Legislative Council to oppose the proposed funding cuts to the Geraldton Camp School and call on the WA Government to abolish these proposed cuts.

And your petitioners as in duty bound, will ever pray.

[See paper 1379.]

PALLIATIVE CARE — METROPOLITAN HOSPITALS*Petition*

HON MARTIN PRITCHARD (North Metropolitan) [10.07 am]: I present a petition containing 1 822 signatures couched in the following terms —

To the President and Members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned are concerned that health patients at Joondalup, Midland, Peel, Fremantle and Bentley hospitals have either no or limited access to specialist palliative care thereby restricting information available to make informed choices about their ongoing treatment.

We therefore ask the Legislative Council to support measures to enable patients at the abovementioned hospitals to be given medical advice about their treatment which includes information about palliative care options.

And your petitioners as in duty bound, will ever pray.

[See paper 1380.]

ROSSMOYNE AND WILLETTON SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS — FUNDING*Petition*

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan) [10.08 am]: I present a petition containing 1 066 signatures couched in the following terms —

To the President and Members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned residents of Western Australia, are greatly concerned that the McGowan Government has cut funding to 26 of Western Australia's largest secondary schools, especially Rossmoyne and Willetton Senior High Schools. Rossmoyne SHS and Willetton SHS are two of the best performing schools in Western Australia, and are regularly recognised for their elite performances.

The McGowan Government's decision to reduce their funding by approximately \$2.3m combined will have serious consequences for these elite public schools, compromising their ability to continue providing the highest quality education. The cuts mean students will no longer receive equitable funding, with students receiving less for their education than elsewhere in the state. This is grossly unfair and needs to be addressed by the State Government.

We are also concerned that the McGowan Government has cut the \$11.78m for Stage 3 of the Willetton SHS rebuild, leaving staff and students in old demountables. Stage 3 is a vital part of the rebuild, as it includes an additional learning block comprising 24 classrooms, 3 incidental learning areas, toilets, store rooms, and car parking. This will have consequences for one of Western Australia's best performing schools.

Your petitioners therefore respectfully request that the Legislative Council call on the Government of Western Australia to reinstate the funding so that students can continue to receive the quality education they deserve. And your petitioners as in duty bound, will ever pray.

[See paper 1381.]

PAPERS TABLED

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

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON DELEGATED LEGISLATION*Tenth Report — “Annual Report 2017” — Tabling*

HON MARTIN PRITCHARD (North Metropolitan) [10.12 am]: I am directed to present the tenth report of the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation entitled “Annual Report 2017”.

[See paper 1382.]

Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD: The report that I have just tabled advises the house of the key activities of the committee for the 2017 calendar year. The committee scrutinises instruments made under statutory delegation and determines whether the instruments are beyond the scope of the delegated power or otherwise in breach of the committee’s terms of reference. The committee continues to scrutinise a large volume of delegated legislation. In 2017, 404 instruments, including 190 regulations and 141 local laws, were referred for scrutiny. The committee tabled six reports. In four of those reports, the Parliament was asked to consider whether five instruments should be disallowed. All five instruments were disallowed by this house. Motions for the disallowance of delegated legislation usually do not proceed in the Parliament if satisfactory undertakings are given to the committee. The committee recommends disallowance only as a last resort. During 2017, the committee received four departmental and 30 local government undertakings.

The committee encountered two sets of amendment regulations that had the effect of abrogating a fundamental common law principle. The committee found that, in each case, the abrogation was not authorised by the empowering acts. Satisfactory undertakings were received in both instances. Four local laws breached their empowering acts due to procedural defects. The Parliament disallowed these instruments at the committee’s recommendation.

The committee also dealt with a number of systemic issues in local laws. These issues did not result in disallowances because the affected local governments provided the committee with acceptable undertakings.

Section 3.12(2A) of the Local Government Act 1995 excuses minor procedural errors in local law-making. It has now been operating for over 12 months and 2017 is the first year in which the committee has had the opportunity to apply it. The report discusses examples of occasions on which the committee has and has not applied the section.

The committee trusts that the matters noted in this report will assist persons and bodies making delegated legislation to understand the committee’s processes and the issues identified in previous instruments. I commend the report to the house.

Eleventh Report — “Shire of Broome Parking and Parking Facilities Amendment Local Law (2) 2017” — Tabling

HON MARTIN PRITCHARD (North Metropolitan) [10.15 am]: I am directed to present the eleventh report of the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation entitled “Shire of Broome Parking and Parking Facilities Amendment Local Law (2) 2017”.

[See paper 1383.]

Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD: The report that I have just tabled advises the house of the committee’s conclusion that the Shire of Broome did not comply substantially with the mandatory procedures prescribed in section 3.12 of the Local Government Act 1995 when it made the Shire of Broome Parking and Parking Facilities Amendment Local Law (2) 2017. The shire failed to notify the Minister for Local Government of its intent to make the local law. Pursuant to section 3.12(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 1995, the shire was to provide the minister with a copy of the proposed local law and the statewide advertisement notifying the public of the proposed local law. In the committee’s view, the local law was made invalidly and, consequently, is not within the power granted by the empowering act. The committee recommends that the local law be disallowed. Disallowing invalid local laws ensures that they are removed from the public record, thereby reducing the risk of public misinformation.

I commend the report to the house.

DISALLOWANCE MOTIONS*Notice of Motion*

1. Shire of York Cat Local Law 2017.
2. Shire of Broome Local Government Property and Public Places Amendment Local Law 2017.

Notices of motion given by **Hon Martin Pritchard**.

**PETROLEUM AND GEOTHERMAL ENERGY RESOURCES
AMENDMENT (VETO POWERS) BILL 2017**

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Hon Rick Mazza**, and read a first time.

Second Reading

HON RICK MAZZA (Agricultural) [10.18 am]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

The petroleum and mineral resource industries are crucial to the Western Australian economy. However, access to private land to explore for and exploit those resources will always raise the question of whose rights prevail. This bill aims to put some balance into this question by giving the owners of private land used for agricultural production the right of veto over access to their land to explore for and produce petroleum. It follows the principles applied to private land used for agricultural production under the Mining Act 1976. Mining has not stopped in this state because of that.

This bill recognises the importance of private property rights because it is the ownership of private property that provides the basic economic incentive that creates wealth. But private property requires evidence of ownership because without that, it is not possible to transfer the economic good associated with that property. That is why Western Australians rely on the government to operate the register of property titles. Therefore, it is the major duty of government to protect private property rights. “Private property rights” does not just refer to the ownership of land; it also means the economic good received by virtue of owning property. In the case of land, this can mean rental income utilising the property to produce goods for sale, or proceeds from the ownership of natural resources. However, since 1 January 1899, all new grants of freehold titles in Western Australia have provided that all minerals are reserved to the Crown. This has had a far-reaching effect on private property rights in Western Australia. Private landholders no longer control the minerals found within their sub-surface soil, even though they continue to own the land itself. Although no doubt well meaning, and meant to facilitate the development of this state’s mineral wealth, this has led to tension between the mining and agricultural industries.

This bill does not stop or prevent the development of the state’s abundant reserves of petroleum and gas resources. Petroleum exploration companies are now moving onshore, after a lengthy period of developing the state’s offshore natural gas assets. These companies have had to deal only with state and commonwealth governments. Now, they must deal with private landowners, who are typically family farmers. The great majority of petroleum exploration companies act in good faith. It is in their interest to maintain good relations with the underlying landowners in their wish to explore for and develop natural gas and petroleum reservoirs. However, as the Petroleum and Geothermal Energy Resources Act 1967 now stands, the private landowner has no rights except the right for a magistrate to determine compensation because they will be deprived of the use of the surface, and for such damages as may occur. For a farmer, being deprived of the right to use their surface land is a mighty hard pill to swallow. When they farm their land, they know they own it as far as the boundary fence, and in some cases as far as the eye can see. Under the Petroleum and Geothermal Energy Resources Act 1967 as it now stands, farmers have no say if petroleum explorers and producers want to use their land—just the right to compensation.

In parts of the agricultural region of Western Australia, access to underground water can also be a critical component of farming activities, especially in the south west of the state. Farmers have fears—real or not does not matter, for it is the perception that counts—that petroleum exploration and production may have consequences on the use of their own land that may run far into the future. Compensation is all very well when something goes wrong, but for some farmers, it is a risk they do not wish to take for any amount of money. When a farmer is compelled by legislation to allow explorers on their private land, it amounts to duress.

Of all occupations, farmers are perhaps the most independent of them all. They make decisions about the weather and the markets, they borrow money against the future harvest, they decide what crop rotation to use, and how much fertiliser to use. In other words, they are used to making important choices of their own free will. It is their land to do with as they see fit, except that the right to deny entry has been taken away from them by the Petroleum and Geothermal Energy Resources Act 1967. The right to deny entry is one of the most fundamental of all property rights. If we are not careful, private property will have little to no value. The value in land is one of the main ways everyday Western Australians generate their wealth. We must protect that value. I ask members of the house to support this bill, and in doing so, put some value back into private property rights.

This bill does not seek to reallocate any existing property rights. The Crown will continue to own the petroleum, geothermal energy resources and geothermal energy. Upon the recovery of any petroleum by a petroleum explorer or producer, the petroleum will continue to be their property. However, private landowners, but more particularly farmers, will gain a small amount of leverage that will allow them to bargain land access with more equality, rather than from a starting position of weakness. It seems that our parliamentary forebears knew this also, because the Mining Act 1978 recognises that agricultural land is deserving of some special protections. In particular, section 29(2) of the Mining Act provides that the consent of the landholder is required for land “under cultivation”.

Further, our parliamentary forebears recognised the great tradition of pastoral grazing of livestock in Western Australia by further defining land under cultivation as being land used for grazing stock in the ordinary course of management of the land. How this consent is to be achieved is best left to the farmers of private land and the petroleum explorer or producer. Like all access arrangements, negotiation and incentives will work best. If we

wish to use someone else's property, we should expect to pay the owner some form of rent, either ongoing, in kind or one-off. This bill will give farmers of private land the ability to allow access to their land, or not, depending on their own inclinations. The answer, of course, lies in negotiation. Just like all the big farming decisions, farmers can make up their own minds. Petroleum explorers and farmers will have to sit down together and talk about access. Some farmers will never agree, but some farmers will act in good faith and, on receipt of some economic rent from a petroleum explorer, allow such access as is required to exploit natural gas and petroleum reservoirs.

In conclusion, this bill has the simple objective of giving farmers of private land the same rights they already enjoy with respect to surface mining on their land in this state. That is the ability to say no, if that is their choice.

Pursuant to standing order 126(1), I advise that this bill is not a uniform legislation bill. It does not ratify or give effect to an intergovernmental or multilateral agreement to which the government of the state is a party; nor does this bill, by reason of its subject matter, introduce a uniform scheme or uniform laws through the commonwealth.

I commend the bill to the house and table an explanatory memorandum.

[See paper 1384.]

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Motion

HON RICK MAZZA (Agricultural) [10.26 am] — without notice: I move —

That this house recognises the importance of irrigation schemes in Western Australia, the concerns some growers have with allocation limits, the impacts on private property rights and the failure of successive governments to implement a workable water resources management bill for Western Australia.

I rise today to highlight the importance of irrigation schemes in Western Australia. Given that water is the most important factor for plant growth, irrigation schemes have a multitude of obvious benefits. People in areas that have uncertain rain patterns can be given guaranteed access to water, which can then lead to an increase in productivity. The importance of irrigation is only going to increase, not decrease. The population also continues to rise across Western Australia. Last week we debated a motion on population increases in the state. The 2016 census recorded 11 per cent growth in the state's residential population, which is currently sitting at 2 567 788 people. These people all have to be fed, and irrigation schemes help support food security.

According to the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, horticultural production in WA was valued at \$909 million in 2015–16, with an estimated export value of \$119 million. Vegetable production was \$380 million in 2015–16, with an export value of \$81 million. WA is responsible for exporting from Australia, in value terms, 81 per cent of all carrots, 92 per cent of all truffles and 78 per cent of all seed potatoes. Carrots are WA's largest horticultural export, with over 70 per cent of the total production exported. They are grown all year, mainly in irrigated production areas. Truffles are grown in the south west. I think we have the Truffle Kerfuffle going on in the south west fairly soon. It has become quite famous. WA now produces 80 per cent of Australia's truffles and has a 92 per cent share of the export market. The value of truffle exports in 2015–16 was \$3.4 million. Fruit and nut production value was \$412 million in 2015–16, with an export value of \$36 million. WA exports 85 per cent of all strawberries exported from Australia, in value terms, making them our second largest horticulture export after carrots. The 2015–16 value of strawberry export was \$22 million.

The need for water equity in WA is further shown with the 30 April 2018 announcement that the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation will investigate how much water is available between Gingin and Moora, via a \$5.1 million project. The investigation will run for eight months and see up to 21 new exploration bores constructed across Dandaragan plateau. The information will be used to establish whether more water can be used for agriculture and industry, and where it can be accessed. The investigation will also assist with the management of water use around Gingin Brook, which has experienced a decline in streamflow of up to 40 per cent since 2010.

There are a number of irrigation schemes in Western Australia across a variety of projects, including Water for Food, the southern forests irrigation scheme, the Kimberley–Ord irrigation scheme and Wellington Dam. These projects have my support, but they are not without public concern. These concerns have been raised by local farmers, and I will highlight them for the benefit of the chamber.

I will begin by providing some background information about the Water for Food program. Water for Food is a \$40 million royalties for regions investment as part of the \$300 million Seizing the Opportunity Agriculture initiative. Water for Food aims to enable development of new irrigation areas and increase the size and water efficiency of existing irrigation districts. The program extends from the Kimberley to the great southern, and includes six projects. Stage 1 comprises four projects in the West Kimberley with a total investment of \$15.5 million—namely the Mowanjum irrigation trial, the Knowsley agricultural area water investigation, Fitzroy Valley groundwater investigations, and the land tenure pathway for irrigated agriculture project. Stage 2 of the program, with \$24.5 million of royalties for regions backing, was launched in February 2015. Stage 2 projects

include the Bonaparte Plains–Ord East Kimberley expansion, the Knowsley agricultural area water investigation, the La Grange–West Canning Basin groundwater for growing opportunities project, the Midlands groundwater and land assessment project, the Myalup–Wellington water for growth project, and the southern forests irrigation scheme.

Today I wish to focus on the southern forests irrigation scheme. Self-supply water users in the Manjimup–Pemberton region have an issue with the southern forests irrigation scheme, which has been established to improve water storage and distribution for the Manjimup–Pemberton region, which is referred to as the “food bowl of the south west”. This region has a gross agricultural value of \$127 million per annum. The continued importance of this area is highlighted by the fact that pumpkin, squash, apples, baby beetroot, carrots and other heirloom vegetables used at Optus Stadium are being sourced from Manjimup. The people of Perth need to be assured that these vegetables will continue to be supplied into the future.

Manjimup has also been identified as a prime location for Western Australia’s fledgling hemp industry. A 300-hectare crop is planned for 2019. Rob Edkins, the managing director of Food, Fibre and Land International Group, was quoted in the *Manjimup–Bridgetown Times* as saying —

... we’re focusing on Manjimup because it’s got a unique growing condition, there are good farmers and there’s land with irrigation equipment ...

Hemp is also grown in Kojonup and Nannup, and trials are expected to be held in the Kimberley and Pilbara this year. The number of hemp growers in Western Australia is expected to double this year to about 40, up from 19 last year and about five in 2016.

I turn now to a report dated 15 June 2016 and titled “Proposed Southern Forests Irrigation Scheme: Land Capability and Water Demand Assessment”. The report states —

The Warren–Donnelly Surface Water Allocation Plan ... describes irrigated agriculture as the largest user of water in the area occupying around 4,000 ha of land and using up to 33GL/y, stored in over 480 licensed private farm dams.’

The southern forests irrigation scheme plans to include a 15-gigalitre dam on Record Brook and around 250 kilometres of pipeline and pumping infrastructure. The scheme will be owned and operated by SF Irrigation Co-operative Ltd, which was established to be owned and controlled by southern forests irrigation scheme water users. Water for the scheme will be supplied from peak flows in the Donnelly River, with water being redistributed year round to irrigators who have purchased a water entitlement for the scheme. The water from the scheme will be used by sites that do not have access to high-quality water or do not have the capacity to capture water. The scheme needs a 9.2-gigalitre quota to make the 15-gigalitre dam viable. In order to satisfy this quota, in 2016, landholders in the area were requested to express their interest in purchasing irrigation water through a letter of intent process. On 27 April, a media statement said that a total of 68 submissions were received, representing 92 properties being potentially serviced by the irrigation scheme, and requiring a total of 10.3 gigalitres, which exceeded the required 9.2-gigalitre quota to make the project viable. The letters of intent were then used to create a conceptual design for the scheme, along with costings and a business case.

Following that process, SF Irrigation Co-operative Ltd asked landholders to become members of the cooperative and enter into binding water entitlement agreements. Water sales closed on 28 February this year. During the water sale period, irrigators could apply for a water entitlement, with the cooperative assessing all applications based on compatibility with the scheme’s terms and conditions. The cooperative has until 30 May this year to complete this process. Applicants will be advised of their application’s outcome once the scheme’s design has been confirmed. As per a southern forests irrigation scheme media release issued in December 2016, the full cost of the project was estimated at \$80 million. On 9 December 2016, it was announced that the southern forests irrigation scheme had received state government support, with \$19 million funding from the royalties for regions program. A further \$10 million was registered by local growers who wanted to be part of the scheme. Further funding of \$40 million was sought through the commonwealth government’s National Water Infrastructure Fund. That application was rejected by the commonwealth government in August 2017.

Growers in the Manjimup–Pemberton region raised concerns when, on 16 November 2017, the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation stopped issuing new water licences for families to build their own dams in eight sub-catchments of the Donnelly River and in six sub-catchments of the Warren–Donnelly Rivers. Land in this area is zoned “priority agriculture”. The department claimed the changes were an interim measure as further investigative work was to be undertaken for the southern forests irrigation scheme. The department claims allocation limits are set by measuring how much water is in the system and how much can be used sustainably without compromising the environment. After word spread about the department’s decision to stop issuing new water licences, a number of growers in the region voted to reconvene a representative group—Manjimup and Pemberton Landowners—in an effort to address their concerns about water allocation limits. Growers in this region have constructed their own dams without subsidy from the state or federal governments. Their source of contention is that water now planned to be pumped from the Donnelly River into a 15-gigalitre dam to be located on Record Brook was originally to be available to farming families to construct farm dams in eight sub-catchments

of the Donnelly River. The group claims that loss of water rights has halved the value of their farms. Food production in the Manjimup–Pemberton area is based on self-supply water in farm dams, and farmers in the region feel they are being forced into a piped irrigation scheme.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: Member, can you just clarify this? My understanding is that it is not that they are losing what they have got; it is just that they are not being issued with any expansions. Is that the case?

Hon RICK MAZZA: Yes, and they are also being asked to divert some of their run-off.

There is no guarantee that self-supply water users will not be impacted if the southern forests irrigation scheme goes ahead. In the future, some farmers may not be able to capture water from streams that run through their properties but will be able to buy it back through the southern forests irrigation scheme.

A 28 March 2018 letter by Jamie Nicolaou to the *Manjimup–Bridgetown Times*, written on behalf of west Manjimup farmers, states in part —

Just like members of the SFIS wanting to secure their future, self supply water users want the same, for generations to come.

It states also —

At no time have the farmers in the Donnelly catchment been opposed to the project, but self supply water users’ ability to have access to water into the future should not be compromised.”

Manjimup and Pemberton Landowners points to a 4 December 2015 media statement issued by the then Minister for Water, Mia Davies, in which Ms Davies stated —

The \$3.6 million project targets an extra 12 gigalitres a year of sustainable irrigation water to meet expansion plans of the Warren–Donnelly irrigation district.

This is extra water, not water to be redirected.

The “Warren–Donnelly surface water allocation plan” of April 2012 states on page 31 —

Consideration of future large scale irrigation schemes is beyond the scope of this allocation plan.

Therefore, this declaration means that the allocation plan makes no provision for the extra 12 gigalitres of water announced by Ms Davies in 2015. Manjimup and Pemberton Landowners claim a 29 January 2018 letter to federal member for O’Connor, Rick Wilson, received a reply stating, according to my notes —

In my discussions with the various agencies and proponents of this scheme I was not made aware that there would be a closure of catchments for self-supply users.

In a letter to Premier Mark McGowan on 19 February 2018, Manjimup and Pemberton Landowners convener Neil Bartholomaeus not only called for water rights to be restored in the 14 sub-catchments, but requested a water resource management committee to be appointed to manage water allocations in the Warren and Donnelly River areas, along with appointing a water resources council for the state under part 2A of the Water Agencies (Powers) Act 1984. The letter also called for a local area management plan for the Warren and Donnelly River areas in accordance with part III, division 3D, “Plans for management of water resources”, of the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914. In his letter, Mr Bartholomaeus wrote that these changes —

... are having an immediate negative impact on commercial plans for food production and are causing frustration and anxiety for farming families.

He also claimed that none of the water plans in WA is statutory. A December 2013 document titled “Securing Western Australia’s water future: Position paper reforming water resource management” states —

Western Australia’s water legislation is some of the oldest in Australia and was originally developed at a time when demand was low and water was relatively abundant. The situation in the 21st century is very different.

Water resources legislation is spread across six different acts, with one having been in place since 1914. The report states —

These Acts were developed at various times to deal with specific water issues but do not adequately integrate with one another and create inefficiencies in management. ... It is time to stop patching the existing Acts and rebuild the legislative framework for water management.

Allocation limits are not mentioned in the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914. Limits are defined though policy, which means they can change without following a legal decision-making process. A statutory water plan would provide growers with a greater sense of security, with plans not being amended without being subject to due process. Current legislation does not readily facilitate the establishment of statutory water allocation plans without the establishment and consideration of a water resources council.

In March 2018, in frustration, Manjimup and Pemberton Landowners escalated its concerns by writing a letter to the federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Michael McCormack, asking him to hold back a \$40 million grant under the national water infrastructure development fund until rights to water of farming families had been restored. The national water infrastructure development fund gives funding priority to projects that are subject to statutory water resource management plans. There are no statutory plans in WA. The letter to Minister McCormack also asked for the development of a statutory water resource plan providing for stakeholder consultation at peak and local levels.

In March 2018, the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation began the process of updating its modelling for the Donnelly River catchment. The south west region manager at the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, Adam Maskew, was quoted in the *Bunbury Herald* as saying —

“The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation intends to use the new information from the Water for Food studies in the Donnelly catchment to review and potentially revise the allocation limits in the water allocation plan area,” ...

...

“It will also help us answer the question whether there would be any additional water for additional self-supply take in the Donnelly River sub-areas.”

Members, as time is getting away, I thought I would touch on the funding recently announced by the federal government to assist with the Wellington Dam project. Wellington Dam is the second largest reservoir in Western Australia and holds about 185 gigalitres. When we consider that Record Brook is proposed to hold 15 gigalitres, we realise that Wellington Dam is a massive water source. I am very pleased with the initiatives that are taking place to utilise Wellington Dam. It is a very large dam that has almost turned into a recreational dam these days because of the salt levels that are found within it. Some of the proposals to deal with the salt are quite innovative. A lot of salt run-off is going to go into an old mine void near Collie where it will be desalinated. I think something I read stated that they would use the old Harvey diversion channel to get the water to Myalup to be redistributed as drinking water, which is quite a good use of some very old infrastructure.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: There is a proposal for piping as well.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Yes, they are going to use the channels and put in pressure pipes for that region. I grew up in that area and, in the early days, irrigation channels were a natural part of farmland being irrigated, but those channels now are pretty much decommissioned. Water does not run down too many of them and a lot of that water is suitable only for stock. The fact that we will do a lot of work to bring down the salt level in Wellington Dam so that we can irrigate vegetables is a very good thing and will improve that area.

With my last few seconds to speak, in summary, irrigation schemes will always be important for Australian food growers because they allow for greater agricultural production. However, these schemes must be economically viable and not at the detriment of existing water users. Do we want to rob Peter to pay Paul? Community concern must be addressed and, by speaking before members, I am helping to fulfil that function on behalf of people living in the agricultural areas of WA. For more than 10 years, successive governments have failed to implement a workable water resources management bill to amalgamate the six acts that relate to the management of the complex water resources portfolio. It is time to move forward with purpose on this front. The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation website stated that the drafting of a water resources management bill had commenced and significant progress was expected by mid to late 2017. If any progress exists on this front, we would be glad to hear about it.

HON JACQUI BOYDELL (Mining and Pastoral — Deputy Leader of the Nationals WA) [10.47 am]: I thank Hon Rick Mazza for bringing this motion to the house. The management of water resources and allocation of water is also an important issue in the Mining and Pastoral Region. Today I will touch on a few issues that we had in managing the horticultural area in the Gascoyne region. Water for Food and irrigated agriculture was at the forefront of the Nationals WA 2013 Seizing the Opportunity Agriculture policy announcement as we headed into that election. We have come a long way with Water for Food and the development of irrigated agriculture since that time, but certainly there is still a lot of work to be done and issues that still need to be managed for current growers as we move towards how we engage with new growers in the agricultural sector.

The Leader of the National Party of WA was the Minister for Water and oversaw the Water for Food project, which was one component of that Seizing the Opportunity Agriculture policy. As Hon Rick Mazza said, it was a \$32 million program through royalties for regions and it is talked about the length and breadth of the state, but we need to see that program move forward. There is no doubt about that. The program extended from the Kimberley to the great southern and captures some really unique areas of the state and some unique challenges for current growers and the diversity of the sector moving forward. As outlined in the contribution of Hon Rick Mazza, there are certainly some synergies with water allocation issues that growers are experiencing across the state.

Water for Food is a new diverse program to allow agricultural expansion. Western Australia must embrace irrigation as we move forward in the agricultural sector. This program is a means of trying to diversify agriculture and learn

how to use better irrigation systems. Pastoral areas in the Mining and Pastoral Region, the Kimberley, the Pilbara and the Gascoyne overlay large water resources throughout the state. There are massive crown land areas in those regions and an untapped source. This definitely provided an exciting opportunity and still does because the government has expressed some support for the Water for Food program, and I am very happy about that. There is so much opportunity in the state of Western Australia, particularly with agriculture, but it requires a state government being committed to that development and reducing the barriers around environmental assessments and capital investment. Land tenure is a really big issue along with water allocations. People are prepared to invest privately in pastoral leases and the development of agriculture in the state, but there are many barriers to that. Somehow, we need to be able to work closer together while being responsible for managing the asset of the state's land, particularly its water, but also be able to capitalise on the window of opportunity that presents itself. I, too, am pleased that the state government has continued to commit funds to the key Water for Food project in Myalup–Wellington, which, despite being outside my electorate, still adds to the agricultural diversity of the state. I absolutely support that.

The water resources management bill is a massive undertaking. As Hon Rick Mazza outlined during his contribution, the existing legislation around water management does not work. The lack of flexibility and diversity in how we manage that resource does not assist the agricultural and horticultural sections or the pastoral industry in their attempts to diversify, say, a pastoral lease or go into a horticultural area. When we were in government, as a local member for the Mining and Pastoral Region, that was a frustration for me. Former water minister Mia Davies progressed the drafting phase of the water resources management bill. It is a very, very important bill for the development of agriculture in the state. We have to get it right and I recognise that that takes time. There is a fine line between the sustainability of water resources and water allocations for industry. When we get down to the grassroots level of how we manage the water allocation for industry and the overarching vision of the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation to manage the asset, in my experience it is hard to line up those two things. It requires the real nitty-gritty of getting down to understanding growers' needs and requirements and maintaining and fulfilling the objectives of an employee on the ground working for the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and working with growers. Obviously, every bill requires extensive consultation, a review and draft papers before it is presented to Parliament, because there are very unique circumstances for different areas of the state and how they manage their water allocation.

I am going to run out of time as well. I turn to a really important issue for my electorate. I will raise some of the concerns about allocation limits that growers have raised with me over time. There is no doubt—I have said this previously—that the government has a responsibility to ensure the sustainable management of water resources, but I also think that it needs to use those water resources for regional development. There needs to be a change in the thought process about how to manage that water resource and how to work hand in hand with regional development in that space. The Gascoyne region is obviously the principal horticultural area and precinct for the state at the moment. It produces between 75 per cent and 85 per cent of Perth's winter vegetables. It is a really important area for the state. When we were in government, we established the Gascoyne master plan, the overarching framework that maps the actions needed to double the value of food production in the Gascoyne area. That was a big task. We consulted widely and lots of people had input into it. There were some key recommendations from the Gascoyne master plan. I look forward to the Minister for Agriculture and Food's contribution so that she can enlighten the house on where that is at.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: Where what is at?

Hon JACQUI BOYDELL: The Gascoyne master plan.

It is very important. Growers had a lot of input into it and they are really attached to the development of the Gascoyne food bowl hand-in-hand with the Gascoyne master plan. It is about managing the water resource and the allocation limits for growers. Water allocation is an asset for growers. It is a very important asset in how they grow their business and also the value of their property. At the moment there is a unique issue in the Gascoyne of an over-allocation on paper of the water resource in basin A, which is the lower aquifer level in the Gascoyne River. Growers in that region have been managing that asset naturally through salinity levels for more than 100 years. If a grower in that area tried to sell their property, the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation could, if that person had not utilised their full allocation—there could be many reasons why they have not done that, including a natural disaster, a flood, off-farm income, disability, illness and families situations—take that water allocation off them. That would do two things. It would lower the asset value to sell and it would lower the person's opportunity to develop their business further. There are major issues. I thank the member for bringing the motion to the house.

HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West) [10.57 am]: I thank Hon Rick Mazza for bringing a very important motion to the house to discuss water resourcing and water management. We could spend hours on this, Hon Rick Mazza. This could be a very significant debate but, unfortunately, we are limited to 10 minutes. I will have to go through this fairly quickly.

One of the issues about getting old is that we end up with a corporate knowledge and a corporate memory of things that happened some time ago. I will run very briefly through where we started this process —

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: That's why it's important that people like you and I are in Parliament.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: That is very important, minister, because you and I were both in another place that shall not be named when this issue hit the forefront.

Members need to be aware that both federal and state water licensing and water management initiatives really started to peak under the John Howard federal government and the Geoff Gallop state Labor government. It happened because effectively John Howard managed to negotiate with the Democrats to get a thing through called the sale of Telstra in the late 1990s. When that occurred, hundreds of millions of dollars—billions in some cases—went into some projects. Some of it went into natural resource management, but a huge amount of it went into something called the National Water Initiative, for those members who are old enough to remember exactly what that was. A massive amount of water was put aside. I accept that a fair proportion of that went into the Murray–Darling basin system. That is the big brother, if we will, of water management in Australia. Plans were also in place in the early 2000s for some of that money to be set aside for the development of the sorts of things that Hon Rick Mazza talked about in Western Australia; that is, a National Water Initiative with a focus on licensing water entitlement and attaching that to the land title so that a water entitlement was attached to a land title. In the Murray–Darling basin, they progressed this a lot more quickly than we did. I still have some concerns about the outcome of that and where that ended up, because I think they over-allocated the Murray–Darling system and the response to that was ultimately to give those people with an entitlement a percentage of that entitlement each year based on flows into the system. I think that built an expectation of entitlement that is not necessarily there. I do not necessarily think that that is the best option available for water management. I think it was over-optimistic, a bit like some of the government's projections for the domestic economy in the next few years. However, it is at least a step in the right direction. Those with corporate knowledge will remember the government of the day and the then Minister for Water Resources, John Kobelke, who was quite a decent fellow even though he and I had some pretty significant debates across the chamber, as I did with the minister for primary industries at the time. That government initially tried to do two things. The biggest and most problematic issue was the proposal to take water from the southern Yarragadee aquifer up to Perth for domestic consumption, which some of us were opposed to because our politics probably allowed it. Some of that opposition perhaps happened behind the scenes for the members now sitting on the government benches, as they were in government at the time. I remember marching at the appropriate time, and the then government members were probably doing it on the inside. But the reality is that that was knocked back, and most appropriately so. As part of that great debate, the debate about water licensing and the attachment of a water title to a land title got thoroughly beaten down, and that is probably to our detriment. That was not the most mature or educated of debates from either side of politics. We have come a long way and we are much better at it now than we used to be. But the reality is that there was a need, even at that stage, for some form of licensing that delineated an allocation and an entitlement. Even in my south west electorate at the time, the big scare campaign was that the government was going to license private dams and, pretty soon afterwards, charge owners a licence fee for a private dam and a volumetric usage fee. Many people in the agricultural and regional areas were very concerned that, effectively, the government was going to take the dam that they had paid \$100 000 to build and charge for its use. There was an incredible backlash. I remember going to public meetings at which people were outraged that their individual rights were being impinged upon. In some cases, that was probably true. Unfortunately, as a Parliament, we were not able to have a mature debate at that time about what might be the good outcomes of that process.

I can tell members that even at that time, as the shadow Minister for the Environment, history repeated itself. We had some very significant discussions with people in the south west land division who were on the negative end of that campaign. Some farming families had been on their dairy farms for decades. Those of us with corporate memory will also remember the managed investment schemes and how that started in the vineyard industry. Suddenly we had vineyards springing up everywhere. Some of those managed investment schemes would build a dam on a catchment that would effectively remove 50 per cent of the dam catchment of the dairy farming family who had been there forever. Even at that point, there was a need for water licensing that conferred an entitlement, but we got bogged down in the “We hate government” response. The Department of Water did not cover itself in glory at that time because it was intransigent. Its presentations basically stated, “We need to do this and we're going to do it irrespective of what the community thinks.” Its performance, I have to say, was not good.

But there is an opportunity for us going forward to try to engage in that mature and educated debate about what better water management and a better water licensing system might actually deliver, because it will deliver. If we do this right, we will deliver some certainty to landholders by delivering both the land and the water required to work that land as an entitlement that can be passed forward. We have to be very careful with it. We have to ensure that it is not simply another bureaucratic licensing of private property. That is an issue that scared farming producers 13 or 14 years ago—a long time ago—and it still scares farming communities now. We have come a long way. We are a little more mature in this debate and it would be an opportune time for the government and

opposition to discuss how we might do this better and, to some degree, have a foot on the neck of bureaucracy to make sure that it serves the community and provides that certainty without simply becoming a bureaucracy that charges a farmer for using their resources in which they have invested. There is a good way to do this and a dumb way to do this. Last time, we got bogged down in the dumb way to do this. We may well go down the same path. If the government and the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation decide that now is the time to introduce licensing for all water catchments and place on it a volumetric charge, I imagine that we will be going to the same public meetings and have most of the same people—some of them have passed on now—doing the marches that we did 10 or 12 years ago. There is an opportunity here to do this better.

I could spend hours on this topic, but I would like to finish. I have lived this issue for decades in the south west land division, but let me finish with Wellington Dam. Not long ago, I said in my budget debate contribution that Wellington Dam is an asset. I would like to get the recreational powerboat users off Wellington Dam, and I think the member for Collie–Preston and I have been in agreement on that for years. Although it is a very big resource of around 180 gegalitres—depending on how much catchment is measured—that is not the dam’s inflow. That dam does not get 180 gegalitres in it every year that can be harvested. In a good year, Wellington Dam might get 100 gegalitres that can be taken out, but in a dry year, on average it might have 20 or 30 gegalitres that can be harvested whilst still leaving some water in the dam. Wellington Dam looks full because its usage is very low due to high salt levels. The last time I checked it was at 1 100 milligrams per litre, which means that it cannot be used for too much agriculture. I wish I had another two hours to talk about this. I will make a final statement on Wellington Dam.

Several members interjected.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Shush! The money for Wellington Dam is not coming from the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund. On behalf of the sitting member for Forrest, Nola Marino, who worked her backside off—God bless her—to get \$140 million for that dam, I will tell members that the National Party meetings made no contribution to getting the money that went into that dam. A week after those meetings with Barnaby Joyce, they were calling for him to be sacked. If members want to thank somebody for that money, they should thank Nola Marino it is an election commitment.

HON DIANE EVERS (South West) [11.07 am]: I really appreciate this motion put forward by Hon Rick Mazza. We really need to discuss this, but going back previously to where we look at —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Matthew Swinbourn): Order! If other members would like to have a discussion, there is always the opportunity to have it behind the Chair.

Hon DIANE EVERS: We need to go back to before we allocate the water. We have to realise that things have changed and are continuing to change. Land use changes have occurred and more water is running off before it can be absorbed into the soil. We have cleared a lot of forest that would normally have created more rain for us, and there is climate change. Rainfall levels are dropping. We do not have the water supplies that we used to have 50 to 100 years ago and rainfall is more uncertain. The rainfall patterns are also changing. We are having summer rains when we never used to and we are having fewer winter rains. Significant changes are happening and we need to address that and see what we can do to mitigate those changes. In addition, the environment still needs water. We cannot just keep taking water out of the environment and hope that it will look after itself. Our flora has developed with certain rainfall levels over the past several million years, and it will change dramatically. We do not know what those changes will be, so we need to make sure that the water first goes into continuing those environmental flows. It is important that we keep our forests. Forests take rain out of the sky and have it drop on our farming land. They create the oxygen we need, so it is important that we maintain and manage the forests as well. On top of that, humans are using the water. We have rights to it, we have need for it and we want to make profit from it, and that is all good. I appreciate the fact that we can use it, but we have to use it and manage it better. We cannot just keep taking it out and putting it into large dams. I am not talking about the dams that have been talked about today, but there are dams all over this country that could be called “evaporation ponds”. The problem with evaporation ponds is that not only is water lost, but also we are left with more salt as the water evaporates. Ideally, we want to recharge our aquifers. Finding possible solutions to get more water absorbed into the ground and down into our aquifers will mean it does not just evaporate. It is a much bigger question than just who gets the water.

We have to look at where rain is falling, where it can be collected and who has access to water. Who does it belong to? Once rain hits the ground, regulations are in place to say people cannot collect water from the ground and that rainfall must be diverted because water cannot be taken out of streams. However, as far as I know, water can be collected off a roof. When I imagined what I was going to say today, I thought about how great it would be if we could put up large solar panels that would also divert water. They could collect rainwater because it would not have yet hit the ground. I understand that the cost would be prohibitive but it is just a dream.

We have to look at where water is needed most and who is making the best use of it. As Hon Jacqui Boyde said, we have to look at industrial, agricultural and domestic water uses. Through regulation, it is up to us and others to work out who has first priority, but best use should always be rewarded. Maybe we need to promote and support the use of good agricultural methods that take rain out of the sky and get it into the soil to recharge the aquifers below someone's land. That will mean water is not running off and we do not have to put it into dams, where it then evaporates.

I am not going to speak against desalination plants completely but looking at the \$3 billion it costs to build one, would it not be better to put even half that money into something that would mean we use less water and less water evaporates to make better use of it? Can we not clean up the water we have and make better use of it instead? We can do other things. This also goes to the mitigation of climate change. Having more forests keeps it cooler and increases rainfall and oxygen. We have to recharge our forests to retain them, which will increase the possibility of recharging our natural aquifers.

I will now take some time to talk about the southern forests irrigation scheme. I thought about this quite a bit. I do not want to say that it absolutely should not happen, but \$80 million is being put into a project that will benefit 68 people who have put in a submission and they have contributed \$10 million. Those 68 people who have the resources to do the project have been able to put in \$1 and get \$7 back from the government. Is that fair and equitable? It is something that deserves to be thought about. In addition, although the proponents want to take water out of the scheme, for which they are paying an eighth of the price, they are taking it for land that they purchased knowing that there was not enough rainfall and no water supply. In order to make sure the recharge happens into the dam that would be created, other people who bought land knowing what the rainfall was and knowing that they had space for dams are being told that they may not be able to use it. I do not understand why we are supporting those 68 landholders who want to take water from another area, when other people may have use for the water where it falls. When the program was originally released, I heard that 1 500 jobs would be created if the dam was built. I then heard that about 548 jobs would be created by the southern forests irrigation scheme to bring water to those 68 properties. The last I heard, around 350 jobs would be created.

I often hear about jobs being created by different projects. Sometimes it refers to any jobs—they might last for just two weeks, they might be construction jobs, or they might be planting avocado trees. It could be a number of jobs, such as 100 jobs for three years, which can be counted as 300 jobs. We have to look at these statistics and see what will happen. We need to look at the southern forests irrigation scheme. Sure, we will get a lot more avocado trees in the northern area of that district, but what will we be stopping in the other areas? I have also heard from the people who have put money or submissions into the scheme. They are also concerned because, as we have already heard, the proposed dam is supposed to hold 15 gegalitres of water. I think at most that they would possibly be able to take out 12 gegalitres if the dam was full in a good year. In a not-so-good year when the Donnelly River is not flowing so well and the proponents are not able to take out that much, and if they uphold their commitment to not take water away from the environmental needs and needs of the people downstream from Donnelly River, there may not be enough water. As rainfall rates decrease, the estimate of how much rain falls now may be completely different in 10 years. We may be left with \$80 million worth of infrastructure that is not meeting anyone's needs. If rainfall halves, how much will they be able to take out of Donnelly River? It is going to be a problem and I do not think that this project is going to solve it. It makes sense to allow self-supply users to take what water was there originally.

I agree with the statutory water plan. We need to have some way of managing the water resources we have. First, we try to mitigate climate change and a bit more rain might eventually fall. We try to mitigate the evaporation of water and the poor use and management of water, which includes allowing water to get saltier by not carrying out good management practices. Then we will take what water we have left and work out who should get it, where and when. I believe that when people buy a block of land, they should be able to take all the rainfall from that block, but that may not be the case anymore. It is a difficult question for people who have bought land with that in mind. This plan adds a new thing.

It is a bit of a shame about Wellington Dam. I have heard we may currently be desalinating water and putting it in there for storage. That information may be out of date because I have just heard in here that the dam cannot be used for drinking water in any case. Every time we talk about desalination, we really have to think about why that is our answer. Will it solve the problem or is the underlying problem our lack of restraint and forethought in how we manage the water we have?

HON ALANNAH MacTIERNAN (North Metropolitan — Minister for Regional Development) [11.17 am]:

I thank members for raising this issue, particularly Hon Rick Mazza for bringing forward this motion. It is vastly important and, as I think all members have reflected, vastly complex. This is a major challenge and every time there is an attempt to deal with this issue, there are people who consider themselves to be adversely affected by that change. I think that we have to accept there will have to be significant change in this area. Climate change models throughout the world show one area of the globe is going to become hotter and drier; that is, the south west of Western Australia. This is happening and it is happening quite quickly. If we are going to continue to have a thriving horticultural sector, then we need to get the irrigation right.

Hon Diane Evers asked why we have to look at desalination as an achievement, when we should just cut back on our water use. The world's climate patterns are changing and the water is not where the people are, so it makes sense to me that desalination has to be very much part of the ongoing solution to that problem. More and more water is going into the sea and sea levels are rising, so, for me, desalination has to be the way forward particularly when desalination plants can be fuelled with wave power, wind power or solar energy, which will not exacerbate the problem that has led to the drying climate in the first instance. .

One of the things that we need to —

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: When's the government going to initiate planning for another desalination plant?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: We also need to look at some alternative smaller scale desalination plants. For example, there is water in the area where carrots are grown that Hon Rick Mazza referred to. Some salination is occurring in that area, so we need to respond to that. We need to explore various desalination measures.

Both Hon Rick Mazza and Hon Dr Steve Thomas spoke about the need to review the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914. We could not agree with them more. I assure the members that Minister Kelly has made this a real priority. He is refining a new model for that legislation. He has been conducting a great many discussions and has engaged with the industry. The Minister for Water has met with irrigation cooperatives, the Pastoralists and Graziers Association of WA, WAFarmers, Irrigation Australia and vegetablesWA to work through these issues. We need to prepare people for the fact that there will always be a degree of unhappiness when change occurs. I remember some changes that the Liberal government attempted to bring in in the late 1990s and how difficult that was. This will not be a pain-free environment, but we need to get everyone on board and understand that we need a much more planned water allocation process. We are hopeful that that new legislation will be introduced. We will certainly be signing off on the notion of the package in the next few months and then, obviously, comes that very massive task of drafting that legislation and getting it through. We are absolutely on the same page. It has to happen and it is a top priority of Minister Kelly once he has finished with the shark issues.

A number of very specific issues were raised by members. In particular, Hon Rick Mazza and Hon Diane Evers were concerned about the southern forests irrigation scheme. In recent weeks, we have learnt that the federal government will not be making a financial contribution. That scheme is on hold. We need to go back to the drawing board and look at it. I was very interested in Hon Rick Mazza's documentation. It is quite clear that this scheme has been sunk at the behest of the local federal member, which no doubt will be of interest to other people in that region, including the very many farmers who have been supporting the scheme and see it as positive.

I am told that the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation—as I said, with any water program, there will be those who consider themselves losers and those who are winners—met with those who were not happy with the scheme, the current water users. It met with concerned individuals and has agreed on a way forward with the Warren–Donnelly water advisory committee and the Manjimup and Pemberton Landowners group and has planned further direct engagement in Manjimup and Pemberton. Hon Rick Mazza did not specifically mention this, but I have not yet received further information on that agreed way forward. We have a bit of time to look at this again. I think Hon Adele Farina has also been involved in this matter. We need to look at it now. We have a bit of time to do that because the federal government, obviously at the instigation of its local member, has sought fit to not fund that program. We will continue that dialogue. We would certainly like all interested members to be involved.

Of course these complex schemes will have their challenges. As the climate dries, what will be the environmental impact on the areas from where we are taking the water? I was very interested in the comments made by Hon Dr Steve Thomas. I will go back and read those remarks. Perhaps the potential complexity of this scheme has been underestimated. I recognise the member's great esteem and affection for Hon Nola Marino. I always love a bit of blue-on-green war raising itself in this place. As far as our department can tell, those funds for Myalup–Wellington have come from the National Water Initiative, which is managed by the National Party. That is the interaction that we have had with the federal government department. It is a bit more than an election commitment; it appears in the budget. The advice that we have received from our department is that it is under that scheme. I have no doubt that it would appear that Nola Marino was in there fighting for that, unlike Rick Wilson, who was fighting against the one in his electorate, which is a very interesting piece of advice.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: The remaining funds in that fund wouldn't cover the cost of the Wellington Dam proposal as funded by the federal government.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: When the member says that it is an election commitment, what does he mean? Has it happened yet? In which election was it committed?

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: Upcoming, it requires additional funding to be put into that fund by the government—the Prime Minister and Treasury—to fund what it has committed to in that dam. It is far beyond the funded scheme.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: It is in the current federal budget. A party might make an election commitment but it is already in the current federal budget. Can the Libs and Nats work a little closer together to get their stories right?

Putting that aside, very serious and complex issues have been raised in this place. We do not have all the answers. I do know that when we come to this Parliament with a new piece of legislation that deals with that systemic problem of operating under a piece of legislation that is over 100 years old, some commonsense is brought to bear. Not everyone will be happy with that. People will come to us and plead their case. When we deal with this, we have to look at the greater good for this state and not just be picked off by small interest groups if we are going to make progress. I have seen it time and again in this Parliament—trying to deal with changing the water legislation and getting a more contemporary, rational and sustainable plan just falls at the first hurdle every time because small interest groups get into the ear of particular members and sink the thing. We really need to take a great deal of responsibility for this. I look forward to being part of bringing this legislation forward sometime later this year. I forgot to mention the progress on the Gascoyne. We have put another \$400 000 into equipping the bores. We signed off on that earlier this year, and in the budget we have committed another \$500 000 to help solve the native title issue there, so that the whole 400 hectares of new irrigated land can be released.

HON COLIN TINCKNELL (South West) [11.30 am]: I thank Hon Rick Mazza for bringing in this motion in non-government business today. It is a fantastic motion, and it is so important because water is Western Australia's second most important resource. I say the second because people come first. It is an issue for Western Australia particularly because of the lack of rain over quite a few years. If we really are to solve the water issues in Western Australia, we need to take the politics out of it. We have heard the bickering going on in this chamber today between the Liberal Party, the Nationals WA and the Labor Party. We need to forget about the politics of it all. It is the only way we can solve major issues like the availability of fresh water for drinking and farming. It needs a balanced view.

There is plenty of fresh water in aquifers and other places in Western Australia. One of the problems is that it is in places where there is no farming activity. We need to continue to look at that. We need to take the politics out of knocking all these different schemes that come up, because without those schemes we would not have solved half the problems that we have solved since. Desalination is a good thing, but it is not the only answer. I am glad that it is here; it provides 70 per cent of our water. It is a very good thing, and we need it to continue, but it is not the be-all and end-all.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: When you talk about the other aquifers, are you referring to the Officer Basin, or are you thinking more —

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: There are aquifers in the desert. As we have heard before, there is water in the Fitzroy Valley, but there are places around Western Australia where there is available water, and we have not yet worked out how we get to it and use it. I suggest to all members in this house and the other place that we continue to look at that scheme and keep our minds open to new ideas that will be put to us. As I said, I do not think that desalination is the only answer, but it is working well for now. Hon Diane Evers made some very good comments. We need to get better at catching and retaining our water. How many people in WA have a water tank at their home? We would probably find that most farmers do, but a lot of people in the metropolitan area do not capture their own water and do not use it; they just get it out of the scheme. We need to be better at that. We need water to be available for all different purposes, including industry, farming and any future mining. It is a major resource that we need to use.

We have had discussions about Wellington Dam. Although I support further dams being built in certain areas, we need to look at the major problem that is resulting in us having a lot of water that we just cannot use—that is, salinity. That is one of the answers to a problem. We have not done enough in the area of solving the salinity problems in Western Australia. Hon Alannah MacTiernan has the soil committee going at the moment, so some work is being done. We have people like Mr Peter Coyne, who put his canal program to me before the election. I am always interested to hear what he has to say. He has been pushing a certain line. We know that the canal system works, but it needs investment so that it can be improved to go to the next level. If we are going to have productive farmland, salinity is a major problem. We need to look at those issues and solve the salinity problem in Western Australia. Whether we solve it or make inroads into it, it will result in more fresh water and create more productive farmland.

Even allowing for substantial improvement in our water use efficiency and for technological fixes, our drying climate, linked to increasing population and lower rainfall, means that serious structural shortages of water will occur in not only Perth but also Sydney and Melbourne. By 2050, if not much earlier, that will be an issue. We know that; we have a long time to fix it, but we need to get rid of the politics and work together in a bipartisan way. The crossbench does that every single day in this Parliament, on every single issue. Although we have differences, we sit down and try to work them out. I suggest that everyone from every party here needs to the same when it comes to water. It is an important issue, and I support the motion.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: What precisely were you saying about desalination, then, in terms of water security?

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: It is a part of one of the answers. We cannot deny the fact that it is providing somewhere near 70 per cent of our water now. That is a good thing, but it is not the only answer. We do not want to just be building further desalination plants. We need to look at other options as well.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Matthew Swinbourn): Order, member! No debate across the chamber, thank you.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: I commend Hon Rick Mazza for his motion. It is a great motion, and we need to have further debates on this and take the politics out of it.

HON COLIN HOLT (South West) [11.37 am]: There is not much time left, unfortunately, due to a few interjections. I will just place on the record that I agree with the sentiment of the motion moved by Hon Rick Mazza. Irrigation schemes are important to Western Australia and will be even more important into the future. That is why we worked very hard in the time of the previous government to create a project around Wellington Dam. The former water minister, Mia Davies, took up the debate strongly to ensure that we had a project that people could advocate funding for. I am not going to deride advocacy at any level. I am glad that we have had an opportunity to advocate for a project that will deliver outstanding outcomes for the south west.

Unfortunately, I have run out of time, but I will continue my remarks in members' statements.

Motion lapsed, pursuant to standing orders.

ESTIMATES OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

Consideration of Tabled Papers

Resumed from 15 May on the following motion moved by Hon Stephen Dawson (Minister for Environment) —

That pursuant to standing order 69(1), the Legislative Council take note of tabled papers 1340A–D (budget papers 2018–19) laid upon the table of the house on Thursday, 10 May 2018.

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan) [11.39 am]: In contemplating this motion, one might move over just about any aspect of activity in our community. Such is the nature of a budget debate. With that in mind, I shall be touching on a number of issues of interest and importance to members. I thought, however, that I might start, in this sometimes overly political environment, with a bit of good news. I am sure the government would like a bit of good news. I received it by way of a letter on 2 May 2018 from a senior character in the resources sector. He wrote —

Dear Simon

...

I am writing to again thank you for your support of the gold sector during last year's gold royalty debate and to let you know how your support has directly led to positive outcomes for the WA Goldfields workforce and our community. Recent positive announcements across the sector are linked to the defeat of the royalty increase and I wanted to share with you a recent announcement from my team.

That attracted my attention. He went on to say —

Northern Star Resources (NSR) has recently announced a partnership with Central Regional TAFE Kalgoorlie to double our local apprenticeship intake from 7 to 14 positions which now totals 26 across the Company. We are committed to training local people for local jobs, both young people entering the workforce for the first time and re-skilling locals looking for a new career. NSR will continue to focus on job creation and the growth and expansion of the industry, to benefit the great state of WA.

Investments like this were at risk under the Labor Government's royalty regime and I wanted to thank you personally for listening and understanding the gold sector's concerns. I also wanted to assure you that the commitments NSR made during the debate would be met and exceeded, job creation being one of your key concerns with the royalty increase policy.

I attach the full story from the front page of the Kalgoorlie Miner (19 April 2018) and would invite you to meet with the Northern Star apprentices when you were next in Kalgoorlie.

Yours sincerely

Bill Beament
Executive Chairman
Northern Star Resources Limited

There is some good news there, and there are also some lessons to be learnt. That is why I commenced my remarks by referring to that letter. Bill Beament refers to an attachment, which is a copy of a story from the front page of the *Kalgoorlie Miner* and a photo of some apprentices. It is a tremendous outcome that this firm will now be carrying 26 apprentices. That is great for the apprentices, it is great for the firm, and it is great for Western Australia. The company will be taking on 14 new apprentices this year. That is really, really something.

Hon Peter Collier: The government must be happy!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: The government would be happy! That is double the company's normal intake of seven apprentices. I congratulate Bill Beament and his team for the contribution they are continuing to make to the gold sector.

People need to take note of a few other indicators in this letter. The letter refers to positive outcomes for Western Australia and the Western Australian workforce. I think that sometimes, amongst all the hurly-burly, that goal is overlooked by governments and government members. That is what we are all in this place for. I get particularly disheartened when, year in and year out, that goal is overlooked and we engage in inward-looking naval gazing about the minutiae of who did what in a tit-for-tat argument that sometimes passes for debate in the community and sadly occasionally pretends to pass for debate in this house. I wish members of the government, replete with backbenchers and others—although it is not as bad in this place as it would be in another place—would understand that we should be about making things better for the people of Western Australia. They should not be about third-hand, petty pointscore and about getting their notes from some media type who says they should have a go at the opposition about what some former government person did or did not do and is that not terrible, or about forty thousand million dollars or whatever slogan —

Hon Darren West: It is a lot of money.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: It is a lot of rubbish, that is what it is.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order, members!

Hon Tjorn Sibma interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Matthew Swinbourn): Hon Tjorn Sibma, I call you to order!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Thank you, Mr Acting President, but I will persevere and get through some of these things.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: They are fascinated by your contribution, honourable member.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Indeed. They are so fascinated that they cannot restrain themselves. They are missing the point that they need to do something to contribute, rather than indulge in the pointless debates, which nobody pays any attention to, that we see all too often—bickering about minor points, or even major points in history, and what type of spin they are going to put on it.

Hon Kyle McGinn interjected.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Is that an interjection or is the member just muttering under his breath?

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order, members!

Hon Kyle McGinn: Forty thousand million dollars! That is not minor, member.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I will tell the member what he can do. I am glad the member has woken up and is paying attention. Why does the member not get up and have his say? I will sit down in due course, and I look forward to the member getting up and having his say. If all you have to contribute to this debate is more of the same bulldust that you get from your Labor Party caucus, and if you think that will make one iota of difference, you are dead wrong. You need to go to the forums that are available to you, whether it is the Labor caucus or this place, and do something positive for the people of Western Australia, because you are not achieving that by your juvenile interjections.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order, members! It is not a debate across the chamber. The member's comments should be directed to the Chair.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I want to thank my friend opposite for supporting me in the theme that I am developing in these remarks, which is that we should try to avoid this pointless and petty pointscore. No votes have been gained in that exchange—unless a few members present decide that they want to vote for me next time. There is no point in that sort of exchange. My point is that we should concentrate more on making achievements for Western Australia, rather than trying—normally pointlessly and without result—to make some sort of political argument that nobody cares about. I think that point is well made, as we just saw from that recent exchange.

Some very good points are made in that letter, and the government needs to take notice of those things. I thought there might have been a muttered interjection from some within government, and I have heard it elsewhere, about how the gold sector is now going through very good times, or better times than it was going through a few months ago; therefore, the gold royalty should have been increased, and in fact probably even been doubled.

Hon Jim Chown: It is a matter of industry confidence.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Precisely, Hon Jim Chown. That is the point made in this letter. It is because industry now has the confidence to invest, and to expand and grow and do a lot of other things. That includes, as is stated

explicitly in this letter, doubling the number of apprentices, and looking forward to taking on more apprentices next year. Gold companies are also, of course, paying more in royalties because of their increased production. They are also paying more in payroll tax. Those employees are contributing via not only their income tax and—bless them—their goods and services tax payments and all of the other taxes they pay, but also taking their pay down the streets of Kalgoorlie, or wherever else they may be domiciled, and spending it on local services and local goods from local Western Australians. It is very good news. I think I made my point about that letter, and I thank Bill for writing to us. We do not get many pats on the back in this game, particularly when we are in opposition. I am not saying that I will frame this letter, but it is very nice to receive that positive feedback, particularly when I can use it to demonstrate to the government some things that perhaps it ought to consider.

I want to focus my remarks on some other matters that I think could help the government if it chooses to stop and think about them. They are potential problems that I see will afflict the people of Western Australia. There are several matters here, but I ask the government to reflect on these matters. If the government reflects on them in the spirit in which they are intended, perhaps it might benefit from it. Bear in mind that I have seen all sorts of governments come and go, and I already see the signs of decay in this one. The signs of decay are very much similar to the signs of decay that I saw in the last Labor government.

Hon Tjorn Sibma: History repeats.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: It does, and that is not surprising given that it is the same people. It is disappointing because we thought they would have learnt something. Perhaps some of them quietly might learn some of these lessons, but I fear that as a government overall it will not. That is about making decisions that are for all Western Australians, rather than some sector that has its favour. I do not know whether members of the Australian Labor Party just does not get it. I am being generous to it. I think sometimes it does not get it when it is doing things that appear to be—at least to those of us on our side—verging on the improper. I am trying to cast my words in a delicate way, but doing things that are wrong will come back to haunt anybody in the public sphere even if, for the present, they are prepared to use the weight of numbers to brush it off or shout it down. I am referring here to activities coming out of the election when undertakings were made and dignified by, “Oh, they’re election commitments.” But there are election commitments that are properly made and ones that are improperly made. I know Hon Tjorn Sibma and others will be looking at this in a very detailed way in the future as indeed shall I, because some highly suspect payments are being made on behalf of ALP candidates that were promised in a particularly selective way during the course of the last election. A lot of things are wrong with that, and if anyone opposite wants to scoff, it underlines my view that I think a lot of them do not get it. They do not understand what is wrong with ignoring due process and using public funds for their own political advantage. Again, we will see more of that, I am sure, sadly, in the next few years. But the reason I raise it now in addressing the present budget —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order, members!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: It impacts on the things that the government should be doing, but will not do because it has blown the money on its own little pet projects and pet people. This government has had only two budgets, and from its last budget to this one, we can already see that it has cut the future expenditure to health, education, police and a range of other areas. It is not that the figures from the past government have been reined in, as the government might like to characterise it. Its own budget figures from last year have already been cut in this year and in the out years for a range of frontline services. The government might want to spin that and say, “This is because we are addressing budget repair or there is debt to be fixed”, or whatever. Rubbish. It is nothing of the sort. That money is not being used for those purposes. It is being used to pay off the election promises that the Labor Party entered into, in my view, sometimes improperly at the last election and that it has pursued since taking office, again, in my view, improperly in many cases since then. That is where the money has gone. It has been taken out of frontline services for Labor to pay for its shallow election promises. That is wrong. In the context of a budget debate, people need to get up and say that it is wrong, and I am. That is one matter that indicates decay, and we have seen it before. I have seen it before in this very chamber.

Some other things clearly show a government that has not got off on the right foot. I have found over the years that successive Labor administrations—they all do it—firstly, have an unwise and dangerous tendency to do policy on the run by press release. I stood there many times during the time of the Carpenter government, decrying this. The government feels a need to put out a press release, and then it worries about policy after that. It tries to retrofit it. In the absence of sensible business cases, budgetary and cabinet processes, quite often it puts out a press release that impacts on a lot of people and then it worries about getting the policy right. More often than not, it finds that no money has been allocated for the thought bubble in question and, secondly, it is not going to work. Rather than backing off and saying, “Oh, heck we got that wrong, we are going to have to rethink it”, it pushes ahead anyway and it ends up costing a fortune to all involved, unnecessarily, to do it wrong. Ultimately, of course, further down the track someone else has to come along and probably spend more money to fix it and pick up the pieces. Lo and behold, we are seeing that again. Maybe Hon Jim Chown will have some comments to offer from his perspective

when he makes his contribution about fisheries and other areas. That is another thing we find that the government is getting wrong. Another problem that is becoming very apparent is that ministers are not in charge of their department or do not have control of their agencies or are not across their portfolios. I must admit that I am surprised—in fact, we have all been staggered, not just surprised—by the sorts of blunders that have been made; political stupidity and policy blunders in the field of education. It is absolutely head-scratching stuff. Somewhere along the line, the call must have gone out to cabinet ministers that the government needed to cut costs across the board. All Treasurers do that. Everyone has to come back to cabinet with their agencies' submissions about how they will cut X amount of money. It is an article of folklore that any government agency will come back with a list of cuts that are plainly politically unpalatable and drop that on their political master's desk. Of course, any minister worth their salt knows that and they say, "Very good. Now go back and do a proper list." This time, what was on the Minister for Education and Training's list—a whole lot of things that no-one would take seriously, one would think.

Hon Jim Chown: It was dropped on the previous minister's desk and he rejected it.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Indeed, because he had a bit of commonsense. He knows how the world works. What is more, he knows what is right and what is wrong when he sees it.

This government had such political judgement that from departmental head level, through ministerial office level, through the minister, through the Expenditure Review Committee, through cabinet, through the Premier's office—all of them are responsible—they came up with such genius solutions as killing Schools of the Air. We know about the ongoing saga with Moora Residential College. That is something that the government needs to swallow its pride about. I will come back to Moora in just a moment. We saw the fiasco of the government wanting to build a school down the road from Perth Modern School for no reason, apart from a political imperative driven by a press release because the government got its nose bloodied when it tried to do what it tried with Perth Modern School just up the road. That is the sort of policy shambles we are seeing.

I go back to Moora. It is not about \$500 000, \$1 million, tuppence ha'penny or whatever is the cost to do some repairs at Moora Residential college. This is something that the government does not get or, because I am starting to think that even members opposite could not be so bloomin' stupid, it does not want to get, and its caucus room—its body of members collectively—has not got the guts to stand up to its leaders .

Hon Tjorn Sibma: They don't have the numbers.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I do not know how it works. But any outside observer, any independent third party, could see that the government's decision to abandon Moora Residential College is an absolute dog of a decision. It is dumb, it is counterproductive and, where it hurts them the most, it will lose the government votes. The response of members opposite, the professionals they are, might be, "Oh, it's all right; we weren't going to win Moora anyway." Is that what it is all about? I will tell you what: they are going to lose a heck of a lot of votes far more widely than they will lose them in Moora, if that is the actual key element that they rely on in weighing up whether a policy is a good one. Apparently, it seems to be. In my opening remarks, I read in some testimony from a respected individual whom I think most of us would know. He talked about getting decisions right and the benefits that flow from that. I have illustrated a few of those in my remarks just now. It is not about whether or not the government spends \$500 000 on an upgrade to a residential college, and believe me that is a bargain basement price if it can be done for that. It is not about that; it is about all the other benefits that will accrue if it does it. It is not taking \$500 000 and throwing it away—no. It is investing it in keeping a vital institution open and the benefits that flow from that—the benefits to the wider community—and not only in Moora, but most specifically in Moora. It is about the local residents who still need to go to that local high school and the breadth of courses that will be offered. It is about the number of employees and the number of jobs. Do members opposite remember them—jobs? They have expressed some concern so here is their chance to walk the walk. It is about the number of jobs that will exist in that community. Indeed, it is about the very nature of the community that welcomes residential students into their community when they have come from their home, and joins with the Department of Education and others in nurturing and developing them. But for \$500 000 or whatever the price is—maybe Hon Darren West has some insight into this; I do not know—it is what I would characterise as two-thirds of diddly squat. However you cut it, you can make a business case for that, yet members opposite will not do it—they will not do it. Why not? They will donate government money, without a business case, to community groups in marginal seats that they want to win, whether or not those community groups have asked for or even want the money, yet they will not provide a little bit of money to fix the situation at Moora Residential College. These are signs of decay. If my friends opposite cannot recognise a wrong decision such as that, they are in big trouble. I am trying to offer them some advice that they might like to reflect on, because it might save them some trouble. I am not interested in simply flapping my gums for the sake of it.

I would like to get onto a few others specifics. But, before I do, I will get one little thing off my chest in the context of this budget. The other day I heard the Premier responding to some bunfight or other and he came out with some quite extraordinary claim that the previous mob, the former government, had somehow wasted, tossed away, forty thousand million dollars—forty thousand million thrown away. I think "lost" is the word that was used.

“Where is that forty thousand million dollars?” “I must have dropped it somewhere.” Grow up, Premier—grow up! It is an embarrassment to see that sort of nonsense, and it is an embarrassment because it is an out-and-out lie. Members opposite might want to serve up that sort of drivel to us, with all the other contempt that they have for their political opponents, with the backbenchers going “nah-nah-nah-nah-nah”, as they seem to, particularly in another place. They might want to do that and think they are smart, but what is the point? The point is that they are lying to not only the public, but also themselves because that is not the situation at all. There are two elements to this. The first is the so-called forty thousand million dollars and the other is about losing it or throwing it away. I will just remind members of this, bearing in mind that I am the sort of member who, if I see a Liberal government doing the wrong thing, is wont to get up in this place and say so. I hope that gives some sort of weight to my remarks. I went looking for the last budget produced by the former government for the end of the 2016 financial year. I looked at the data that existed at the end of June 2016, which was the last full financial year of the last government. There are a number of ways that we can measure debt, but for our purposes the figure that I will quote for debt at that time was \$27.347 billion. In terms of the quantum, that is nowhere near \$40 billion. Will debt grow to \$40 billion in due course? Yes, it will, according to this budget, which is the second delivered on Labor’s watch, and it need not. If members want to ask me at any time why it need not, I could of course tell them. Clearly, what is not happening in this budget—it has no signs of happening under the new administration—is any sort of determination to put a dent in the debt amount. The government’s only strategy seems to be: “We’re going to keep on going until we can get the annual deficit back to balance and then into surplus.” The fact that we have deficits is a problem that confronts the state—no question. There are reasons we have that. Some might have been in the former government’s control, but a very large part of them were not. If that is a strategy to tackle a big debt problem—“Let’s get back into surplus and slowly start paying it down”—I do not think it will be very successful. In terms of a forty thousand million dollar debt, this new government has some ownership of it. In terms of the forty thousand million dollar loss or throwaway, it is not right to lay that at the feet of the former government. It is simply untrue. The thing that makes it offensive is those articulating that throwaway line, “You’ve lost forty thousand million dollars.” No, it is untrue. Indeed, debt is not \$40 billion at the moment, but it is going to get there under Labor’s watch. That is the quantum, and no doubt we will have arguments, tit for tat-style, in this place about that in the future.

I want to come to the other point: what is the nature of this debt? The nature of this debt, as at the time I quoted when debt was \$27.347 billion, was that 31 per cent was the \$8.5 billion owed for electricity infrastructure—Western Power—and nearly \$5.7 billion or 21 per cent was owed in respect of water infrastructure. That exposes a big lie about this forty thousand million dollar loss. It was not a loss; it was spent on investment in essential infrastructure, which in many cases had been deliberately let go under the previous Labor administrations and, in some cases, if members remember the pole top fires of just over 10 years ago, with tragic consequences for that portfolio area. There were other events that we need to be reminded of from time to time to do with the terrible things that can happen when the money that needs to be applied is not applied to the maintenance of essential infrastructure. I have a feeling that we will be coming back to that in due course, but it will not involve me reminding members today or at any other time about the other ills of past governments, because I have told members that I am fed up with and sick of that sort of argument going back and forward across the chamber. I am trying to warn members about the future. If the government persists with what it is doing now and does not spend money on the things that need it, those bills will be worse in the future and there will be consequences. People will pay, and sometimes they will pay more dearly, and not just in cash. Let us not have any more nonsense about forty thousand million dollars, and let us not talk about it being lost. It is invested infrastructure. It could be argued that losses are when a deficit is caused by a failure to restrain recurrent expenditure. That is fair enough in a sense, but investment in infrastructure is certainly not throwing away money and it is not losing it, unless it is being done without a business case and it does not achieve the outcomes that should be achieved.

Before I move on, I will talk a little more about water. I was interested to have drawn to my attention the Economic Regulation Authority’s 2016 report titled, “The efficient costs and tariffs of the Water Corporation, Aqwest and Busselton Water”, which was tabled in Parliament on 30 November 2017. That makes interesting reading for anyone who has an interest in public administration. I must say that the newest member of Parliament, David Honey, MLA, member for Cottesloe, has certainly hit the ground running on this. He is a great acquisition to the membership of the Parliament. He has certainly drawn attention, as have others, to the apparent over-recovery of water charges in relation to cost. I know that from time to time this house, particularly through the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation, is very sensitive to this question of over-recovery through fees and charges. That is interesting! I wonder whether the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation, through its deputy chair, Hon Robin Chapple, or in his absence, his faithful sidekick Hon Martin Pritchard, will in due course—sorry if I am shaking; this is delicious anticipation—move a disallowance motion on the Water Corporation’s next round of charges?

Hon Peter Collier: Yes, 188 per cent.

Hon SIMON O’BRIEN: Well 100 per cent would have done—no, the member means the level, of course. I was joking.

Hon Michael Mischin: Using the word “charges” ironically.

Hon SIMON O’BRIEN: Indeed, I was. I thank the members to my right for their assistance.

I hope they have not put me right off or I might have to start again. Members opposite would not like that. There we go; that is something else we agree on.

I think that is an interesting thing to contemplate, but I do not want to contemplate it any further now. I want to say something about water, where it comes from and whether we are allowed to use it.

In recent days, we have been lectured by government members—bless them—through their Minister for Water, and perhaps the Premier. I cannot even think, offhand, who the water minister is; he has obviously made a big impression on me. Can anyone think who it is?

Several members interjected.

Hon SIMON O’BRIEN: Someone must know.

Hon Colin de Grussa: Is it the same bloke who talks about sharks all the time?

Hon SIMON O’BRIEN: Is it the same bloke—the shark bloke—is it?

Can members on the government bench, who I know are paying close attention, tell us who the water minister is? Is it Dave Kelly?

Hon Peter Collier: Enlighten us.

Hon SIMON O’BRIEN: They cannot remember either. They do not know who it is either! They dareth not speak his name and that is just as well because I would never want to be accused of inciting unruly interjection, Mr Acting President.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Dr Steve Thomas): Thank you, Hon Simon O’Brien.

Hon SIMON O’BRIEN: We were roundly lectured—when I say we, I mean the people of Western Australia, particularly in the metro area—and admonished because some of us are “guzzlers” of water. Apparently, that is some sort of crime. I do not like to see anyone wasting water. I get as concerned as anyone else—I always have done—when I see a tap left running unnecessarily. Is it just me or does anyone else think it is amazing that the Water Corporation, which is there to provide and retail water to its customers, tells us to use less and less of it and it wants to punish us if we use more of it? What producer of anything tells its customers, “Jeez, I wish you’d stop buying our stuff! And what’s more, if you don’t restrain yourself, we’re going to charge you extra”? I cannot think offhand of any other corporation in the world that takes that interesting position. Back in the good old days when we relied on dams in the hills, that was fair enough. There were genuine water shortages caused by lack of rainfall, run-off, or overuse. Now we have access to desalination and it is a success here in Western Australia, why on earth are we to be restricted, or does the Water Corporation feel it is restricted, from producing water that people want to pay for to use? I do not get it. I may be the only person on the planet who does not get it but I do not think so. What is wrong with people wanting to use water if they are not exacerbating some sort of shortage? What is wrong with that? I am not talking about wasting water or wantonly spraying it around, but what is wrong with people using potable water? Why will a household with several adults—parents, perhaps a grandparent in residence, and there may be some adult or teenage children in a family—be told it is a guzzler when it goes over a certain level of water use? They will be punished by paying more for their water, yet a two-person family, which would clearly have a lower average requirement for water, will be subject to the same rules. It does not make sense. What is the problem with the Water Corp, backed by its minister—whoever it is; that still remains a little bit unresolved at the moment? Does the Water Corp not believe in people having a wash? Does it not believe in people washing their clothes? Does it not believe in the kids having a bath?

Hon Michael Mischin: Well, it’s not safe to do it in the ocean anymore.

Hon SIMON O’BRIEN: It certainly is not and once people have run out of the ocean, they need to rinse off. I do not understand it. That is my homily on the Water Corporation for today. I will watch this space with great interest as we contemplate a government that, again, while not killing or putting a dent in the deficit and not restraining debt from increasing quite substantially over the next few years, is nonetheless gouging the Water Corporation’s customers for water that they are not allowed to use. That is not going to stop them using water. They are still going to be charged more by this government—maybe as much as 13 times the rate of inflation.

Hon Jim Chown: It’s a cash grab.

Hon SIMON O’BRIEN: Indeed; it is a cliché, is it not? The term used is “cash cow” and I cannot think of a better or more concise term.

A number of other things are of concern—there always is in public affairs. I will raise them, as I should in this place, because I want to get some things done for my constituents and the people of Western Australia generally. That does not mean that members will see me bobbing up every day about some particular issue.

Hon Jim Chown: Why not?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I will tell members why not; it is because, generally, members do not have to resort to taking up the Parliament's time to highlight a problem that needs fixing because they can just get on and fix it. Fortunately, some ministers in this government run offices that are quite receptive to raising constituent matters when people tell them, "We've got a problem here; can we do such and such?" They get a good response and the outcome that they need. In my view, a member should try to resolve things quickly and promptly, and by going straight to the source before raising the matter in Parliament. Again, one's first recourse should not be to a petition, a press release, a speech in this place or putting something in the paper grizzling about something. Members should try to fix things before they complain. That brings me back to the theme I introduced with the letter at the start of my contribution. It is about getting better outcomes for the people who we represent, rather than just politicking for the sake of it.

In conclusion, it is true that I have alluded to this budget having a bit of smoke and mirrors in it but, if truth be known, most budgets do; I am sorry to shatter your innocence, Mr Acting President, but that is the brutal truth. The dark arts of Treasury are practised as they probably have been practised for a very long time. However, I cannot help but feel that members of this government need to understand that if they are going to perpetuate the system of pretending they are spending money and putting out press releases while they are actually pushing out expenditure beyond the budget time in the forward estimates, eventually that will catch up with them. Already, I can see that starting to happen, although maybe others do not. I give a heads-up to government members that I am watching for that. It will become more and more apparent. It cannot be avoided by constantly arranging dialogue that invites members to complain about the previous government, regardless of whether it has any merit.

I will mention one other thing in my conclusion, which brings us right back to the chamber. I think the Minister for Environment is a very good member. I am about to destroy him totally by praising him on the public record. He has done nothing to deserve that apart from being a nice guy.

We all know that our friend Hon Stephen Dawson, as Minister for Environment and Minister for Disability Services, has some heavy and onerous duties. In a serious and nonpartisan sense, I wish him every success in delivering in those important areas. I have previously wished him all the best privately. I had the benefit of a briefing from the Disability Services Commission, arranged through the minister's office, which was done promptly. Because of a matter in the house yesterday, which commanded the attention of us all, I asked for the briefing to be moved. Again, that was done without fuss and it was a very successful briefing. That is how things should happen. I thank the minister for that.

We should look at the context in which the Disability Services Commission finds itself. I will probably have something to say about the NDIS and whatnot on other occasions; in fact, members can bet on it. The DSC, which is facing challenging times and is not going to endure in its previous form at all, is part of a larger super or megadepartment, as they tend to call them these days—the Department of Communities. The minister has my sympathy. In my experience—I have been involved in the integration, disintegration and reintegration of government agencies to and from departments—I am looking at something that will produce tears before bedtime. Although that sounds a little flippant, it could be quite serious. I have serious doubts about whether it is practical for one director general to seriously manage all those agencies that have been siloed or tried to be siloed into one. I do not think that will work. Even though the architects of this—I know that the minister is not necessarily the architect—might reassure themselves that there are some nice synergies here, with Housing, Child Protection, Disability Services and all sorts of things thrown in, the fact is that they are not just going to sit and gel there; all we are doing is concentrating a whole lot of different problems. For one director general, it will be difficult to be across all that. Administratively, they can be but they have to be hands on in a policy sense as well. I do not know that even someone as remarkable as Grahame Searle or, indeed, anybody can achieve that. Good luck with that, minister, but I fear it will be difficult. How on earth can we have a single agency reporting to five different ministers? It is just crazy and it is not going to work. Who gets to call on the director general after Monday's cabinet meeting? When I was a minister, that is when I had my major debriefing by my director general. We saw him only once every five weeks, if we were lucky. It is not going to work. Good luck with that; the minister is going to need it. Nonetheless, I thank the minister for the courtesy that he extended to me, and I am sure to other members. It is a pity that it has not been reciprocated by those whom he unfortunately has to represent in this place.

I refer to a couple of questions that I have asked recently through the laudable Minister for Environment in his capacity representing the Minister for Transport; Planning; Lands. This is an appropriate place to raise this. I asked a series of questions about the terms of the agreement for funding Roe Highway stages 5, 6 and 7, which I think were for funding for stages 4, 5, 6 and 7 back in the day. That question was lodged on 8 May. The minister was put into the position of having to provide me with an answer that was plainly inadequate, but that is the job he has, unfortunately. I asked a follow-up question on 9 May. Again, seeking to clarify it, and commenting that this part of the question was left unanswered and using terms such as "to put the matter beyond doubt", I asked whether the minister could tell me this and that. The answer I received to the key bit was that there was considerable communication between the state and federal ministers on these projects at the time, yet I was asking a simple question: did it or did it not? The government cannot answer that. That is regrettable. If people want to push my buttons, that is one way of doing it, although why on earth people would want to do that, I cannot imagine.

On Tuesday, 15 May—the day before yesterday—I asked a question. It was an innocuous question; it was not a debatable matter. I was seeking some information. I asked for the total amount that was proposed to be spent on the purchase of passenger railcars. To that part of the question, the government told me that \$1.6 billion had been allocated over the period 2017–18 to 2027–28, but I had anticipated this. This is a big project going over the forward estimates, going beyond this year. I asked a second part to the question on Tuesday, 15 May. I asked —

What is the amount proposed to be spent over each of the financial years from 2018–19 until the final year of commitments entered into ...

I asked the government to break it down for me. The answer I received was just thrown in with the first answer —
... with \$29.5 million to be expended in 2018–19.

Why not just answer the question? When it was not answered, I wondered what the government had to hide. I have to tell members a little secret. When it comes to next year or the year after or the year after that, I am not really that worried how much the government has allocated for spending on railcars, but I am taking a professional interest as a member in that. It is reasonable that I ask, so why not tell me? When the government does not tell me, that tells me that it has something to hide, so that attracts my attention. The minister could have just answered this question and I would have said, “Thank you very much” and gone off and done something else. But now the government has excited my attention, so I will have to find out what it is trying to hide and why. Does the government want to know another little secret? I already know. It is the same smoke and mirrors I alluded to about pushing expenditure out beyond the current budget to hide it, to pretend it is not there, so it can make its bottom line look better.

Does the government think I came down in the last shower? Indeed, I did not.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order, members!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I did not come down in the last shower. Half the time, particularly if I am asking questions, as the minister's colleague to his right, who has been around in various places and in various portfolios over the years, knows only too well, I have been involved in some of these matters for very many years. Again, if a minister refuses to give me the answer to something that I probably know the answer to already, it only excites an interest that they have something to hide. There is plenty more to come. I will see the government at next year's budget. I hope some of my comments are of use to members opposite because they are always offered constructively.

HON DIANE EVERS (South West) [12.40 pm]: I appreciate this opportunity to offer my budget debate contribution. Following on from the eloquent speech we have just heard, I hope that some of the comments I make are relevant, appropriate and of use to our ongoing deliberations. Last year, when I first heard the budget speech, I called it the budget of hope, because there was so much hope that the financial situation would not get worse. Maybe we would see more goods and services tax, the price of iron ore would go up or the value of the dollar would drop. It worked. Where we are now, it seems that things are picking up. We seem to be on a better trajectory toward keeping the budget from blowing out while, hopefully, delivering the services that are so necessary to the community. When I heard this budget speech, there were no surprises. We were pretty well forewarned of everything that was in it. There was not a lot of meat in it; it was just there. It is quite conservative in its projections of what we should expect in the future. It is not that it is dull or boring. It is a good budget. A conservative budget is much more useful going forward. When we do not have the money, it is hard to be out there trying to spend a lot of it and build things up. With limited funds, with trying to keep the budget under control, I think there are still some good things in the budget. That does not make it perfect; there is always room for improvement, and I hope to offer some of those things.

Budget time feels a little bit like the day before Christmas, when we are all wondering what we are going to get. Then, when we get a no-surprises budget, it makes me look again at how we do it. This is a state budget, after all. It is not like the federal budget that was brought down two days earlier, in which there were some real big-ticket items and changes. We saw Liberal and Labor at the federal level handing out Christmas gifts in the form of income tax reductions. It is not a great way to manage it, but it has been done before. We all remember, before the 2004 general election, John Howard handing out \$600 for every child, and promising that if we voted for him and brought him back in, we would get another \$600. I had four children at the time, but it still did not make me vote for him. Money gets handed out by the federal government, and everybody thinks that is wonderful, so seeing this budget two days later, we kind of expected the same thing—what are we going to get out of it? It felt like the day after Christmas, when the gift has been opened. It was not exactly what we wanted, but it will do, and Christmas will come again next year. As I said, the predictions and assumptions are conservative—one might even say too conservative, but that is prudent. Having not spent our future revenue, other than, as the point was just made, with the railcars in the future—having held back that spending in the next few years allows the government to work with the finances at the time to deliver something useful in future years. It is prudent, and I find that useful.

I would first like to touch on revenue and the goods and services tax. We should see the report within the next couple of weeks and find out whether Western Australia will receive any advantage. Many people around the country realise the situation that we are in; we have been promoting it quite widely for some time now. Until the report is released, we will not really know what is going to change. One thing that I hope to see is something done about gambling revenue. Taking account of the revenue that a state can raise still does not count revenue from gambling. That would be a significant change, because if we do not get that through soon, there will be pressure to allow more gambling here, to raise more income that way. It is ludicrous to me that a state can raise gambling revenue and not have it count towards its GST calculation.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: It is a disgrace. I calculated that we would get \$400 million a year more if that \$6 billion of gambling taxes was brought to account.

Hon DIANE EVERS: Absolutely.

Hon Aaron Stonehouse: Maybe we should legalise pokies.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: It is the social cost.

Hon DIANE EVERS: Exactly; there is no reason for it, and hopefully we can hold that off.

Our lithium royalties will count against our GST. How can that be justified, at a federal level? It makes no sense. I hope to see something change there. Earlier we heard a speaker talk about the grant funding. I think Hon Dr Steve Thomas said that we should not really be counting that as a benefit in this year because it is just a commonwealth bag of money thrown in to help us with some of our infrastructure projects. Of course, many of those infrastructure projects would not be going ahead if we did not get that funding. If we took the funding away, we would also take the expense away. Any funds that the commonwealth wants to give us is great, but unfortunately when they are tied to something, it does not make up for the GST, because the GST allows us to use the money for what we need it for—the delivery of services to support the people of this state in the way that the government chooses to.

Another area of revenue that was spoken about was the iron ore price. I also agree that maybe it is conservative. As Hon Dr Steve Thomas pointed out, it has been at a pretty consistent level all along, and it seems that it is being held at that. Maybe I am still working on the hope from last year that the price increases as the demand around the world increases. I know that China had been importing quite a bit of it at a time when the price was quite high and ended up with significant reserves. From what I understand, those reserves have been dwindling and it is possible that the price will go up, but we should not spend the money until we know that we have it. That makes sense.

On the other hand, there is debt. I like the idea of repaying some of our debt. We have heard members in this chamber go on and on about how it was said that we are going to repay debt like a mortgage. It is nice to hear those statements, but we cannot really take it literally. The idea is that a state can have a manageable amount of debt, and we have to decide what that manageable amount is. At the moment, seeing that it is likely to go up to \$40 billion, with very little that we can do to change that, is that too much? I personally think that it is. As I will get to later in my speech, that \$40 billion net debt, at the 3.6 per cent interest that we are paying on it, costs us \$1.5 billion in interest each year, and that is if interest rates stay where they are. We really need to look at that because that \$1.5 billion could be spent in many better ways. The idea that it would take 80 years to pay off the debt at the current rate is facetious; it does not really bring us to any great point, because we are not going to pay off the debt. We are not going to have a state with no debt; that is just not the way things work.

I refer to Hon Simon O'Brien's comments about how government corporations operate. It amused me when he suggested that he might be the only one who does not understand. I hope that he is the only one who does not understand, because it is very basic. Those corporations are not there to make a profit at the expense of the people of Western Australia and they are not there to simply use up our resources as quickly as they can. I happen to agree with the way Western Power, Synergy and the Water Corporation operate. The idea is to encourage people to use water and electricity more appropriately and to not waste it unnecessarily. There is much that can be made there. I have digressed, I will get to that subject later, and return to the debt now.

To suggest that we should try to reduce the debt any quicker than has been so far determined in this budget would be taking money out of our system of delivering the services that the people of Western Australia so correctly need. That is one of the points of government—to provide services to people who need them. It would be interesting to have that discussion sometime, but we are here for a broad range of responsibilities, and some of those are to provide the utilities at an equitable rate to consumers in Western Australia.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Are people paying too much for water, or do you think they should pay more?

Hon DIANE EVERS: I will get back to water later in my speech.

I am very pleased that this budget includes the setting up of an Infrastructure WA advisory body. I spoke about that quite often last year when we were talking about spending money on infrastructure and assets. For some time in this state, projects were undertaken without a business case and a cost-benefit analysis, and without any idea, it would seem, about the future consequences. We know that from the Langoulant report, which we have gone

through over and over again. I do not know what the makeup of that infrastructure advisory body will be, but that advisory body could look at the needs of the people of this state, and prioritise those needs and balance them out. I keep hearing the idea that we need another desalination plant. I just think, “\$3 billion, Water Corporation, user-pays.” That will cost us a lot. We need to pull back from that. We need an advisory body that will look at the needs of the state and the priorities, and at projects that will either help reduce ongoing expenditure or enable the state to make money in the future. I will get to public transport and Metronet. That will take pressure off our roads if we can manage it properly and if we discontinue the idea of putting up public transport charges. If that advisory body is stronger than Main Roads WA, it can assess transport projects and decide whether they are needed, whether they are a priority, and whether they are worth spending money on or borrowing money for. That is why I am really pleased that this infrastructure advisory body will be set up. It may avoid cases in which, because of the whim of a Premier, the Premier can gloat about the launch of frivolous creations such as the Belltower and Elizabeth Quay. Those types of projects might not be undertaken if we recognise that we are spending more money than we have and are spending the money of future generations on frivolous things that are unnecessary and may not deliver on the investment. I really appreciate that this infrastructure advisory body will be set up. I feel that I was listened to, and that a number of people out there are thinking the same way—that we need to stop building these frivolous things.

I want to comment on one other area. I take pleasure in reminding the government that community resource centres are a vital part of our regions. I had hoped this would be the Christmas gift I was looking for—that that little amount of \$6 million would be tossed back in the budget of the CRCs so that they would be able to pay their staff at the rate they deserve and continue to deliver the services that they have been delivering.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: I know you are good at numbers, member, but it is \$5 million, not \$6 million—\$13 million minus \$8 million is \$5 million.

Hon DIANE EVERS: That is right. I think I had rounded the \$13 million up to \$14 million at one point. If it is only \$5 million, there is even more reason to put that money in there. The letter that was delivered to the CRCs states that there is a plan to support the facilities by encouraging various state government departments to compensate them for their efforts. However, this is not a very good plan. The CRCs deliver mental health support, physical health support, education assistance, youth support, support for seniors, multicultural services, communication services, small business support, community facilitation and so on. Members will get the idea. They do a lot in their communities, based on what those communities need and the facilities that are available to deliver those services to those communities. The government is saying that state government departments should contract with individual CRCs for the delivery of some of these services. Is the government suggesting that agreements should be set up between the CRCs and the Department of Communities, the Department of Health, the Department of Justice, the Department of Education, the Department of Training and Workforce Development, the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation, and so forth? To me, that makes absolutely no sense. Why would the government want each department to deal with each CRC individually and incur all the paperwork and administration costs that go with that? I have not seen the report that has come out about what should happen with the CRCs. The CRCs are working and delivering services. It is only 10 months before we get to the next budget. The funding for CRCs needs to be put back in the budget. It makes no sense to have an individual plan for each CRC. That might create jobs, but that is not what the government should be about. The government should not be trying to create jobs within government.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: Member, can I just ask you a question? It was reported in the paper that very significant businesses are being run out of the Wellstead CRC—which is in your electorate—and out of the Gnowangerup CRC. Do you think they should be paying their way or do you think we should be providing facilities for those significant businesses?

Hon DIANE EVERS: From what I understand, CRCs have fees and charges for things such as printer use and computer time. The minister talked about people running their businesses out of a CRC. It may be that they come into the CRC for half an hour a day to send a few emails or use the printer. We are trying to encourage small businesses. In many areas, either the NBN does not exist or the service is very poor, so people need to go to another place to get that service. Some of these businesses may not be as financial as other businesses are. If we were to say that they would have to pay \$50 a month to use that space, that might be enough to push the person to not bother continuing with their business. The person may be running that business not necessarily for the income but to provide mental health support. The business may not be making an income for them, but it gets them out and talking to people and feeling that they are part of the community.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: These are people like Summit Fertilisers, which is running its business through the Wellstead CRC.

Hon DIANE EVERS: Clearly, if someone is running a successful business out of a CRC, that is fantastic. As I have said, CRCs charge fees to cover some of their costs. Why should we not support small businesses in regional areas? I get what the minister said—they are making a profit out of the CRC. However, how much are we talking about? Is that a reason to cut the funding of CRCs by 40 per cent?

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: It is suggesting that if these are the sorts of services that are being provided by CRCs, perhaps these companies could contribute something to the operation of these CRCs.

Hon DIANE EVERS: As I said, if that could be worked out with the successful businesses, that would be a worthwhile thing to progress. But I do not think the minister will find many profit-making businesses or large-scale income-producing businesses that are operating out of a CRC. Albany and Bunbury, and maybe some other communities, have business development centres that provide opportunities for businesses to get that sort of support, and also to get people off Newstart, which we are trying to do as well. Many of these small communities have no other option. Why would we not want to offer them the support that they could get in a larger city, without asking them to pay for it? We could discuss this all day, but I will move on.

I now want to talk about the increased charges to households. Some of these increases are above CPI. If we are working on a cost-recovery basis, or if we are trying to influence people's use of utilities, sometimes that makes sense. However, I find the six per cent increase in water charges hard to accept, because I know that many people in disadvantaged situations are not able to cover those increased household costs. I appreciate that people who use a large amount of water—above 500 kilolitres of water a year, which is more than double the average use—will be charged significantly more. If people are using a considerable quantity of water for their lawn, we have to wonder where they live. This is Perth. We do not get a lot of rain in summer. We have sandy soils that do not retain water. Why are people trying to maintain bits of lawn in a built-up area?

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm

Hon DIANE EVERS: Before the break I had started to address increases in household costs. Increases above the consumer price index are somewhat unreasonable, but in providing these services, the government must try to recover those costs equitably from all Western Australians. However, we expect good management from that cost recovery. The possibility of another desalination plant has been mentioned a few times in this house. I wonder why that suggestion comes before we think of reducing consumption or recharging groundwater storage areas. The cost of a new \$3 billion desal plant will be passed on to users, so rather than creating a new desal plant, we should be working with people to try to get them to limit their water usage. If in 2021–22, an interest rate of 3.6 per cent were applied to a \$3 billion desal plant, we would be paying more than \$100 million each year in interest alone, and that would be another cost that would have to be made up through the cost-recovery method. That is why it is important our corporations are not run like businesses, but are run like government enterprises—not to make a profit from their transactions but to deliver services.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: Do you think the first desals that we built were wrong?

Hon DIANE EVERS: I would not say they were wrong. I do not disagree with desal completely, but before we consider building another plant, we should weigh up other opportunities. I have been involved in community organisations that have been trying to reduce water usage and they had some effect on the community. I think that is a really good thing to do.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: And we have done that.

Hon DIANE EVERS: But it does not mean that we have done it and we are finished; it is one option we should continue pursuing. We need to also look at agricultural and industrial water use. I think that there is scope to reduce the amount of water that goes to those industries. As I said, in agriculture, we still need to look at ways of increasing the water absorption capability of the soil so that water does not keep running off and it can be retained to be used on the land.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: You'll get Hon Jim Chown very angry because it sounds like you are supporting regenerative agriculture there!

Hon DIANE EVERS: I will not hold back from supporting regenerative agriculture. I think that there is a lot of future in it. I am here for the future. I know that we have done things in the past that have not been so good for the environment and I think that we can do better. Industrial water use is another thing we would need to look at, but I do not claim to know the detail of that. Also water is lost through system. I am from Albany and until about 10 or 20 years ago, some of the original water pipes there were still made of wood. Imagine the water lost from those pipes over the years. That is why we have to be smarter. Rather than saying that desal is our next option, we should be looking at other things so that we do not have to do that. We may need to also look at the management of water supplies in other places around the world where there is less water.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: Many a junket to Israel has been had; I do not know what the outcome has been.

Hon DIANE EVERS: I think that can possibly be done a little cheaper and easier now with the internet.

The budget is progressing some good ideas. The groundwater replenishment scheme will end, I think, next year, but more can still be done in that area. It is not a one-off thing. We can still plant more trees to get water to stay on the landscape longer. We can also use biogas from human waste to power wastewater treatment. I had not realised that we were doing that. Why not use the resources we have so that we do not have to use other resources

that might have a better use? Charges for water access are being put up by three per cent and the charge for the first 500 kilolitres of water is being put up by six per cent. Of course there must be equity for people in disadvantaged situations so that they get a reasonable service at a reasonable price. Everybody should have access to sufficient water at a reasonable price.

The government will also be charging people who use a lot of water at a higher rate. As I was saying before the break, people should not be washing cars on the footpath or in the driveway because that water can be used on the garden. People do many things that use water. In fact, some years ago—I have not seen it recently—people would sweep the footpaths using their hoses. Luckily, people have stopped doing that, but an excess amount of water is still going on lawns. I am not a believer in artificial lawns, but native groundcovers can be used in place of lawns.

Electricity charges will increase by seven per cent. Again, that is cost recovery. It was mentioned in this place the other day that we should still sell Western Power. I do not understand that argument. I get that it may be worth more now than it may be in the future so we should take the profit and run, but a government is not a for-profit organisation; a government provides good and equitable services to the residents of the state.

Hon Tjorn Sibma: Would you not agree with the proposition that governments have the capacity to recycle assets and that one of the things you could do with the sale of a utility like Western Power is to channel the sale proceeds into another investment, which grows with value over time and provides services to meet the changing needs of the population?

Hon DIANE EVERS: I understand the member's point, but I do not agree that we should sell Western Power and then use the money in another way, because we would still not be providing residents with electricity. If we did, we would have a system such as that in the eastern states, which was privatised not all that long ago. An issue has just come up recently over there and they are saying, "Gee! We didn't notice that they were given the right to charge for their income tax liability and rather than just charging the \$200 million that they should have been charging, they are charging \$60 million." That was in the news only a couple of days ago. The member can look at it. When an electricity enterprise is privatised, even when it is regulated, governments lose some control over it. Just look to the eastern states to see what has happened there with their electricity supplies.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members!

Hon DIANE EVERS: Utilities have been trying to recover more costs than they deserve. They have gone through the regulator to do it and it has been faulty and wrong and they have been charging people for something that they should not have been charging for. That is what happens when a utility is turned into a for-profit organisation. In this state we have a good electricity system. Many new opportunities are being put in. The community is being told about other renewable energy sources and there has been a trial of that. I think after the fires in Esperance burnt a lot of the poles and wires to a number of farms, it was realised that it would cost a lot to replace the poles and wires, yet the electricity provider had a responsibility to do that for those farms. Instead, it did a trial of six standalone systems with renewable energy and battery backup, and diesel backup generators for extreme cases. The six trial projects worked so well that they will now do another 60. That is the kind of innovation we need to see because things are changing. We are not living in the Dark Ages, 50 or 20 years ago, or even last year. New things are happening and we have to be poised and ready to accept them and put them in place equitably for Western Australia residents. I also believe we should support those who cannot manage it on their own. I believe we should keep government trading enterprises in government hands, and that they should be run effectively and efficiently to properly deliver services. I really look forward to the installation of the next 60 microgrid systems, because the more we do the more possible they become for people on properties some distance from the grid.

I am concerned about vehicle registration costs. Either last year or this year there was a \$99 increase for insurance, and there will now be another \$20 increase. It is interesting that, similar to people using less electricity and water, people are moving away from having vehicles. We may reach peak vehicle at some point soon, and instead of people having two or more cars in their family they may go back to one or, in some cases, none. Each household will have to take that into account to reduce their own costs. I believe there are some concessions on the registration of farm vehicles. A landowner with a number of vehicles can get a concession. A \$20 increase may not seem very much, but for someone running a number of vehicles it all adds onto their costs.

The emergency services levy will increase. We found out of the details of that over the past couple of weeks. It seems as though it will be put into the uses hypothecated. It will go back into creating a rural fire division that we hope will provide the answers we need to deal with rural bushfires. I am also pleased to see that some of that funding will support the south west emergency helicopter. We debated that for some time last year; it is a very good service that saves many lives, and it is very important that we continue to provide it. I understand that the ESL is one of those costs we have to pay as a cost-recovery situation.

I am waiting to see whether the on-demand transport levy works. I heard about that idea a few months back. It is just another cost on transport, but it will be interesting. It is one of those things we have to try. I have said that things will change in the future; we have to address those issues as they arise, not five years after. There will also

be a public transport subsidy increase, which I do not agree with. We talk about cost recovery, but the government should not try to recover the costs of public transport. The budget states that another \$800 million subsidy will go into public transport, but we will raise only about \$200 million from it. If putting up the price stops one more person from using public transport, that is bad. The more people we get on public transport using those shared services, the fewer people we have on the roads, the less congestion for the rest of us who are driving each day, and the less funding we have to put into maintaining and increasing the size of roads all the time. Ideally I would like free public transport to really see how many people we can get onto it and off the roads. At the moment public transport returns only—what?—20 per cent of the cost, so it will not make that much difference if we can get that many more people on it. In terms of roads, \$200 million does not go very far. That is something for the future. We can acknowledge it today and work towards it over the next four or five years with all the new trains coming on; hopefully one day we will get there.

On cost recovery I have two other things to talk about in the budget that appear to be doing the right thing. The Building and Construction Industry Training Fund will now include the resources sector. That it is aware and accepting of that makes a lot of sense. We need to put the money into training, and we might as well have it on a user-pays system. It is the same with the exploration incentive scheme. The increase in mining tenement rents will ensure ongoing funding for the exploration incentive scheme, and that seems to be the best way to make sure it continues. When we talk about user pays, if it applies to individuals it should also apply to businesses.

I turn to regional areas. It was a pleasure to see that when the other house was discussing the budget and giving budget reply speeches, much of the debate showed strong support for regional areas. I was really pleased to see that. From time to time early on in this century, regional areas were forgotten. I think the whole royalties for regions thing brought it into the view of the government and it knew it had to do something. Money was thrown at the situation, sometimes not to the best benefit. I think some of that money was wasted quite abysmally, and I hope we never get to that point again. Money will continue to be put into the regions, and I am really pleased to see that.

Unfortunately, most of the comments made in the other place were on infrastructure projects. Infrastructure projects are good; they provide some income and benefit to the community while being built, and hopefully provide an ongoing service. But I would really like to see services in the regions increased. I have not yet seen that. We have just come through the machinery-of-government changes that were to result in 3 000 people taking voluntary redundancies—2 000 have done so, and we expect another 600. It is great that we are trying to sort of squeeze the departments and make sure that unnecessary work is not undertaken, but it worries me that services may be reduced. We already have regional areas that need greater services in education, health and general community wellbeing. We need small business support. We need working phones and internet connections, and more agricultural research into how best to manage our landscape and into value-adding—the products we could do more with to increase our exports and business around the community.

I talked to a few people at the World Bee Day presentation in the courtyard today, and it was really nice to see how much change is happening out there. Having lived in Albany for the last 25 years, I thought honey was a big, happening industry. It turns out that up until five years ago, the south west was where most of our beekeepers were. I had this jaundiced view of how many bees there were because there seemed to be so much honey being produced around Albany. As it turns out, it was a very small amount. In the past five years there has been a significant increase in beehives and beekeepers—not business ones, but hobby beekeepers. I cannot remember the numbers, but we now have about three times the number we had in the past. That is because honey is recognised around the world as a good-quality food. I cannot say who developed it in Western Australia, but I think the money to start up the research centre for honey came from the Department of Agriculture and Food. That was a positive step that I hope we can take with other products. The south west and the rest of Western Australia—I know the south west best—has so many opportunities. Just about everything grows down there. The reason locations for these things can be found is that the climate range from the north to the south is so great. That is where we can increase it. We need support in regional areas and business development in industries associated with agriculture, which is very strong down there, to make it even stronger.

I mentioned community resource centres, but we must also revisit the changes announced for camp schools and Moora Residential College. If this government recognises the strength and value of healthy and resilient regions, it should prove it. If it wants people to move to regional areas, it should encourage and support them. I see signs of good things happening in the regions, primarily the Department of Agriculture and Food, but we need more of that. If this government wants to stay in for another term, it will have to get the regional areas. People in the regional areas may not have a lot of votes in the lower house, but they have connections to a lot of people. It would be very valuable to keep them onside.

We have population pressures in Perth. One way to relieve this is to encourage people to move to regional areas. Towns are closing up because people are moving away. Families are getting older and very few kids are coming back. If accessible schools that offer year 12 subjects can keep kids in regional areas, they will keep families there. Moora college may have only 30 or so students, but those students are keeping Central Midlands Senior High

School open. If the closure of the college leads to the closure of the school, the town will lose more families, which is not good. We need to encourage people into the regional areas. It is a wonderful place to be but our culture tells people to stay in the city because that is where they will get a job, an education and health care. But that is not true. Good things are in the regions as well. We need to help change that culture by making the regions look attractive and encouraging people to live there by providing the services they need. We need a commitment. There are signs that this is happening, but we need deeper soul-searching by the McGowan government. The importance and value of regional areas should not be underestimated.

I understand that sometimes it is difficult to reverse a bad decision. I am sure that if one of these decisions gets reversed—the college closure, the CRCs or the camp schools—the Liberals will love it. They will get in the newspaper and say that the government is backflipping. I wish we could act like grown-ups, get beyond that and make good decisions because that will make the state healthier and the people more resilient. I do not want to say a compromise or a deal, but maybe the Labor Party and Liberal Party could talk to each other and try to get something out of it that will be best for people in the regions and not just pointscore. If the government intends to support regional areas, it must create an environment that will attract families with high-quality educational opportunities, business and employment opportunities and a thriving, diverse and progressive agricultural sector. We should take the pressure off our ever expanding metropolitan area and encourage people to go bush. What better way to introduce this than by increasing the use of our still government-run camp schools. If the camp schools are handed over to private enterprise, they will become more expensive and less accessible to students. We should keep the camp schools in the Department of Education and give it a go. It will show that this government can run them well, and can attract students and their families to the regions. A bad decision reversed may cause embarrassment for a week or so, but a bad decision in the regions that is carried through will remain in the memories of all involved for generations. The government should remember the community resource centres. If it supports these, it will have 105 regional venues for delivering government services to the bush.

General government expense growth is predicted at 0.9 per cent. This is difficult because the Greens encourage service delivery and want people to deliver services, yet we expect it to be efficient. We push for infrastructure such as public transport and schools, yet we try to hold back on unnecessary infrastructure that will encourage consumption, such as desalination plants and the wastage that goes with them, or roads that address only peak period problems that could be solved with better management.

An area in which expenses have changed is salaries. I remind members of the machinery-of-government changes to encourage 3 000 voluntary redundancies. Salaries make up about 40 per cent of total general government expenses. Through the machinery-of-government changes 2 000 people have taken up voluntary redundancies, senior executive service positions have been reduced by 20 per cent and wages have been frozen. We want a balance of fair pay and service delivery. Education, health and policing are larger departments for salary expenses. After those machinery-of-government changes have come through, they are showing slight increases for the following year. A little of that would be the \$1 000 pay increase or people coming back into positions that were lost. Some of the savings were given back to the departments because if they had five people doing several jobs that were not needed, there may still be a job there that needs to be done. We will see how that works out, but I note that expenses for salaries have increased slightly.

I have mentioned the cost of interest before. In 2020–21, our interest cost on the consolidated account is expected to be \$1.1 billion in one year. That is where our profligate spending has put us. Think what we could have built with \$1.1 billion. We could almost have built a hospital, a stadium or a lot more roads. But we could have improved our education system or increased our public transport. The \$1.1 billion we will be paying in interest costs is more than five times our current revenue raised by public transport. At a cost of \$200 000, if we were to make public transport free, plus the cost of adding a few more services—at peak periods more services would be needed—we could seriously reduce the amount of vehicle traffic and subsequently reduce our need for road infrastructure and the corresponding land acquisitions, pollution, fossil fuel use et cetera. That is another plug for that idea. Maybe we will be looking at that one day. I am posing the idea now for people to consider and to realise that maybe that is our future. Keep in mind the figure of \$1.1 billion in interest in 2020–21. The budget papers estimate an interest rate of 3.6 per cent on consolidated account borrowings and 2.1 per cent for interest revenue. That is a 1.5 per cent differential, which leads me to question whether we have funds invested that could be better used to reduce our debt. I have found a couple of points regarding this in the budget. Page 36 of budget paper No 3 states —

- lower interest revenue (down \$79 million), largely due to a revised cash management strategy ...

I am really pleased to see that someone is thinking about where we are investing our funds and whether we can just invest them by using them to reduce our debt. It further states —

- ... a revised cash management strategy for the Public Bank Account (lower investment balances are required to support the State's interest commitments, matched by a commensurate decrease in Consolidated Account borrowings), resulting in more efficient use of cash.

Page 40 in the same volume states —

- a \$1.9 billion increase in investments, loans and placements, largely due to an expected improvement in the Consolidated Account cash position as operating outcomes recover over the forward estimates period, partly offset by the revised cash management strategy noted earlier in this chapter; ...

I assume that a timing difference might explain the difference in the lower interest revenue; however, I support the efforts to better manage the state's cash assets. The reason I found this of interest when I originally looked through the budget is that there is no point in having \$10 billion invested at 2.1 per cent only to be borrowing \$10 billion at 3.6 per cent. I think everyone in here should be able to understand the maths in that. For every billion dollars invested, we are effectively paying \$15 million. That is the interest rate differential. If agencies had funds to invest, they could invest in our own government and we would effectively earn that \$15 million. It may not seem likely that there would be a spare billion dollars around to invest, but if we look at the royalties for regions fund on page 229 of budget paper No 3, there is a balance of \$1 billion. Over the year, nearly another billion dollars will be added and nearly a billion dollars will be taken out, leaving \$1 billion. The act requires the money to be there, but if the act could be changed so that the \$1 billion could be reinvested in the government, it would give us another \$15 million. I figure that that \$15 million could cover Moora Residential College and the community resource centres, just by investing it back in the government. That is just a thought.

I will now move onto the infrastructure body that I spoke about earlier. Most of the commonwealth grants are for specific items; the money has to be spent on the project for which it was given. Those projects would not go ahead without the funding.

I have been talking a lot about the cost of public transport, but this is the asset investment side of it. Total asset investment through the forward estimates is over \$6 billion in 2018–19. I will just go onto Metronet.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! I am sorry to interrupt, member, but there are several audible conversations around the chamber. Perhaps members might keep that down a little, so that I can hear the member on her feet.

Hon DIANE EVERS: Thank you, Mr Deputy President.

Metronet is definitely an area in which we should be putting money. We have to plan for it as soon as possible. We should have planned for it 10 or 20 years ago, but I am pleased to see that something is happening now. I am very pleased that it will be a priority for railcars to be built in Perth or Western Australia. I think at least 50 per cent of them are supposed to be built here. I cannot see why we could not aim for more than that.

Road funding is another area into which a lot of funding is put, but times are changing, as mentioned earlier. The future is in public transport wherever possible and in ride sharing and vehicle sharing, so that we end up with fewer cars on the roads. As I said, a falling number of motor vehicle registrations has resulted in the need to reduce Main Roads' operating expenditure. That is mentioned in this budget. We are already seeing a fall in the number of vehicle registrations. Given that the funding from vehicle registrations goes directly to Main Roads, it will have to find a way to pull back some of its operating expenses. We have to look towards the future. Other cities around the world are looking at ride sharing and vehicle sharing. Even though WA has so much space and quite a bit of wealth, even though we do not always notice it, those things will be hitting us as well.

Housing is another area. An amount of \$394 million will be spent on building 1 390 homes over the forward estimates, with the state-funded proportion of that being \$184 million. This sounded really good—1 390 homes—until I wondered whether they would be additional homes or whether some homes would be demolished to give the space to build these. How many homes do we usually build? It outlines 320 social housing dwellings and 400 affordable homes—I am not sure whether the other 670 are unaffordable homes; I hope not. It is important that we put in more social housing, but I hope we do not see a decrease or a net figure lower than that 320. A lot of the homes in this project will be built near the Metronet stations, which I was very pleased to see. The Greens' WA 2.0 policy, launched in 2013, said just that—if public transport is being built, people need to live nearby. That way, not so many parking lots need to be put in next to the public transport. People can live there and can walk to public transport or can find other methods of getting there.

For asset investment over the course of the forward estimates period, \$6.25 billion is budgeted in the first year, \$5 billion in 2019–20 and then \$5 billion for the next two years. One thing I note from infrastructure asset spending is that we do not know today what will come on board in three years' time. All we are planning for are the things we know about today. If we are already saying that it will be \$5 billion for four years from now, how much more will come on board in that time? That is where I worry. For everybody who knows about budgeting, everything that one thinks one might spend needs to be included. We do not want somebody coming midway through the year and saying, "We just thought of this; we want this as well." It has to all be put in there. Sometimes governments overestimate how much work they are going to get done. Through the course of the year, although it says that \$6.25 billion will be spent in asset investment, maybe only \$5.5 billion will be spent and the rest will be carried forward. However, that amount will be carried forward just for the projects already in there. My real concern is that if we are saying that there will be nearly \$5 billion spent on asset infrastructure in 2021, that does not leave

so much for the election, when the government will want to put in a few extra things to get a few more votes. It kind of ties it up. Maybe some more thought should have been put into that. Hopefully they are all good projects, but I guess time will tell.

In terms of revenue from government trading enterprises, page 35 of budget paper No 3 reads —

- lower revenue from public corporations (down \$440 million), mainly reflecting;
 - lower dividends and tax equivalent payments from the Water Corporation (down \$310 million), ...

Yet on another page in the same volume—page 247—it states —

Revenue from public corporations in 2018–19 is expected to be \$437 million (or 19%) lower than in 2017–18. This is primarily the result of the electricity corporations' and port authorities' 2016–17 interim dividends being paid in 2017–18, ...

Was it the Water Corporation or the electricity corporations? I then looked at the table on the facing page, which suggests the latter—dividends from electricity corporations show a \$400 million decrease, potentially from timing differences in dividend payments. It is interesting that in the same budget it states at one point that it is the Water Corporation that is reducing these contributions of the government trading enterprises, and on the other page it says that it is Western Power and the energy corporations. The former explanation for the Water Corporation does mention lower customer revenue from lower consumption. That is a conundrum for a utility organisation such as water or power. Efforts are being made to reduce unnecessary consumer use rather than trying to build it up so that they can earn more, because as a state body we do not want to use up resources that we do not need to. There is no point in doing that. It makes it more expensive to provide the service, because it has a lower quantity in the delivery of service, yet we have to maintain a price cap on that because we have to make sure that the service is delivered to everyone equitably. It is a conundrum, but we have a lot of people in these organisations who should be able to work it out, because we do not want to economically disadvantage sections of the community that are already struggling.

Back to the Public Transport Authority, as many members may have heard me say last year, it just does not make sense that it is treated differently from Main Roads. It is a government trading enterprise, which suggests that it is able to recover some of its costs through the sale of its services, but it will not. It is recovering 20 per cent, and if the government puts the price up, it will recover less because more people will go away from the service. I would still like to see some change in that but I realise it is outside our hands. I still look to the future and see that the Public Transport Authority is in competition with Main Roads for funding and for the delivery of the service of transporting people from one place to another. Somehow, as I said before, we have to work together across our departments. We cannot keep this silo mentality in which one department and its executives and the people who work within that area are trying to hold onto their little kingdom. That has not been official, it is not efficient and it is not the best way to run it. We have to somehow get the departments talking to each other, so, as I said earlier, I look forward to hearing from the government at some point about how the departments are working with each other to deliver a better service, because it is an area in which we can improve.

The Forest Products Commission, as everybody probably knows, is always under my radar. The budget has \$14 million for the purchase of land, which is interesting, because in part 3 of the Forest Products Act 2000, section 10(2) states —

It is not a function of the Commission —

- (a) to be vested under any Act with land;

Why is there \$14 million in the budget over the forward estimates for the FPC to purchase land? That is probably a question I should ask during estimates, because I have difficulty with the Forest Products Act. It sets us in a bad situation and I would like to see it changed. If we want the Forest Products Commission to own land, and the act states that we cannot, we should bring the act back and look at it. If we do, I hope we look at many different sections within it.

It is interesting that the government has invested \$1 billion in royalties for regions. It would be good if we could invest that in the government, but that is another change that would have to go through the act. It is interesting to count funds that go to the regions separately, but maybe that is what we need to do. We need to keep making sure that regions are addressed, as they should be, in providing the services that they need to keep people living there. I do not know whether we need to do more research on that, or whether members will just take my word for it, but we need to get people moving out to the regions. It seems to be happening in the south west—there is a slow movement southward—and also in the agricultural areas in the wheatbelt. A lot of those communities would benefit from having a slightly larger population, but people are not going to move there if we do not have the services and opportunities for them, and if we keep removing them. That is where that money could be directed.

I will be summing up shortly. I understand it is hard to work together in this chamber for the good of the state. I feel we are hampered by history, by the adversarial Westminster system that we have, because it is not the best way. It is not the way to deliver the best that we can to the residents of WA with the resources that we have. I do

not think I will be able to change the overarching legal system that we are in, but I do wish that we could work together more to get good things through, and a little more quickly. Here I am taking the time to state all this, but I find it important that I get some good things done while I am here. I imagine that is why everyone is here. It just seems to me that we should give up the idea of the tit-for-tat one-upmanship. I get the situation we are in, in which the opposition best benefits itself by making the government look bad, but that does not benefit the state and it does not benefit the residents of the state.

Hon Tjorn Sibma interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! Hon Diane Evers is making a speech.

Hon DIANE EVERS: We can do better. I have hope in humanity. I have hope and expectations that people here want to do what is good for the state. If we want to spend the next three years continuing to fight, argue and draw things out, I will be quite happy to let everyone I meet know just how useless the system can be, because I do not have the power to change it. I am not saying that everything is bad; I think we get a lot of good things through, but, gee, it is dead slow.

Hon Peter Collier: That is the Parliament though.

Hon DIANE EVERS: Yes.

Hon Peter Collier: That is what Parliament is all about.

Hon Nick Goiran: It would be quick if they would actually answer our questions.

Hon DIANE EVERS: Yes; okay.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon DIANE EVERS: That is a perfect demonstration of what I am talking about. I do hope—I have to hope; I am here for a while—that people listen, work together and try to advance the benefits we have of living in WA. It is a great state and it is very important that the residents are looked after, supported and recognised for being strong contributing members to our society, and that our society is looked after by the resources of the government in a way that does not silo each department into its own little section. People should be working together across the departments. In the statement about salinity that I made yesterday, after reading the Auditor General’s report, I said that we have the Department of Agriculture and Food and the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and that they need to communicate and work together. That is what we need to do as well to try to make some good things happen for the benefit of everybody. I know we will not agree on everything—I am not asking for that—but we all agree on some things, and it would be nice to move those things along. This budget is one of those things that I hope to see get through the processes in the not too distant future.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Hon Pierre Yang**.

METROPOLITAN REGION SCHEME AMENDMENT 1308/41 — WANNEROO

Statement by Minister for Environment

HON STEPHEN DAWSON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Environment) [2.48 pm] — by leave: Earlier today, metropolitan region scheme amendment 1308/41 was tabled. The amendment proposes to rezone approximately 2 206 hectares in the Wanneroo locality from the rural zone to the urban deferred zone in the metropolitan region scheme. The proposed urban deferred zone will facilitate future residential development, schools, commercial centres, public open space and conservation areas, among other uses, in accordance with the proposed new east Wanneroo district structure plan. This amendment process commenced in 2016. The proposed amendment implements the recommendations of the Western Australian Planning Commission—adopted 2011 “East Wanneroo Structure Plan” and is consistent with the north west subregional planning framework, which forms part of the Perth and Peel@3.5 million strategic suite of planning documents.

The land is being zoned urban deferred as a range of requirements need to be addressed before the land can be transferred to the urban zone. This includes the preparation of a new district structure plan. The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage is developing the structure plan for the broader area to ensure that landowners are given greater certainty and that the many challenges that this area faces are addressed. We have adopted a process that I believe will create a fairer outcome for all those involved in this highly fragmented area. A community reference group will be established to ensure that a broad cross-section of the views and perspectives of residents and landowners is appropriately represented and that the issues and opportunities identified by the community are properly understood.

The finalisation of the district structure plan will guide future planning of the locality and the coordination of infrastructure and land uses, particularly given the fragmented land ownership of the precinct. The ability to develop land under fragmented ownership in an orderly way, improving certainty for landowners and equitably sharing costs, is a priority for the government. In relation to the development of this area, continuing work is required to confirm the provision of water and wastewater infrastructure, a district water management strategy and a bushfire

hazard assessment, among other planning requirements. The Environmental Protection Authority determined that the proposed amendment does not require formal assessment under the Environmental Protection Act 1986, and provided advice on flora and vegetation, terrestrial fauna, inland waters environmental quality, amenity and human health. These matters will require further consideration in the subsequent planning stages. The amendment was modified by the inclusion of four areas that were originally proposed to be reserved as parks and recreation in a future MRS amendment. Investigations confirmed it was appropriate to include these areas in the urban deferred zone, as their environmental values are to be considered as part of the east Wanneroo district structure plan and subsequent detailed planning stages. In accordance with the statutory provisions for region scheme amendments, this amendment was advertised for three months. A total of 447 submissions were received, comprising 25 general comments, 117 comments of support and 305 comments of objection, all of which were considered by the Western Australian Planning Commission in making its recommendations to the Minister for Planning.

I commend metropolitan region scheme amendment 1308/41 to the house.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND INJURY MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2017

Second Reading

Resumed from 15 May.

HON ALANNAH MacTIERNAN (North Metropolitan — Minister for Regional Development) [2.52 pm] — in reply: I thank members on all sides of this place who have supported this legislation. It is very important that we proceed with it. As has been said, these provisions came out of a review into the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act that was completed in 2015. However, unfortunately, it was not acted upon to the extent that it affected any change of law. We have taken some of the provisions from the review of the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act that will provide fairer and more just compensation to the families of workers who have died on the job—people who are occupational fatalities. I appreciate that all members support that.

Hon Michael Mischin raised a series of concerns in his address. I have provided in writing a copy of the responses to the member. I seek guidance from the member if he would find it acceptable that I table that material rather than read it out.

Hon Michael Mischin: Given the questions were raised in the course of my second reading contribution, it is better if they are put on the *Hansard* record by being read out.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: We will try to get through them very quickly.

Hon Peter Collier: You can have them incorporated into *Hansard*.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I was intending to incorporate them. I seek leave to have these answers incorporated into *Hansard*.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: It is not normal practice that a second reading reply be given non-verbally and a matter recorded in *Hansard*. It is a matter for the house. The minister has sought leave.

Hon Michael Mischin interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I will quickly run through them.

Hon Michael Mischin sought clarification of the indexation methods. The proposed lump sum entitlement is 250 per cent of the prescribed amount. The prescribed amount is the maximum for a non-fatal injury. The current act provides for the prescribed amount to be varied each financial year based on the percentage of variation in the wage price index for WA. The new lump sum death entitlement would therefore be automatically adjusted each financial year.

In relation to commencement and proclamation, the advice is that a proclamation date is required for operative parts of the amendment act, as arbitration rules, regulations and administrative instruments must come into operation upon the commencement of the legislation. A question was asked about what subordinate legislation will be required. Existing regulations relating to claims and compensation for dependants that would otherwise be in conflict with the new amendment act will need to be repealed. Those include the amount of the child's allowance, the funeral allowance, the methodology for automatic indexation for subsequent years and the formula to be applied in the event of insurers seeking discharge of the child's allowance by payment of a lump sum.

Amendments will also be made to the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Arbitration Rules and there will need to be some new administrative instruments. To minimise any delay in commencement of the amendment act, the Parliamentary Counsel's Office has been requested to commence drafting the necessary subsidiary legislation while the bill is progressing through the Council. The subordinate legislation is not complex and will take approximately two weeks to finalise. It is intended that the amendment regulations and arbitration rules will come into effect at the same time as the amendment act is proclaimed.

Hon Michael Mischin sought clarification that there will be no retrospective operation, and that is the case. He sought information also on the number of claims and the cost impact of the increased entitlements. Approximately

20 traumatic work-related fatalities in Western Australia are reported to WorkSafe each year. On average, 30 compensated fatalities are reported to WorkCover WA. As part of the recent actuarial assessment, the recommended premium rates received an updated cost impact. The initial cost impact was around \$4 million and the revised impact is around \$6.5 million. The revised \$6.5 million costing will still be a very small increase to the premium paid by employers. We believe that will be a 0.7 per cent increase relative to the overall cost of the scheme, which is \$1.2 billion. The member sought notice of the status of the larger rewrite of the compensation statute. Hon Bill Johnston, the Minister for Commerce and Industrial Relations, has made it clear that this will build on the work of the final report of 2014. He is planning to have a draft of the legislation ready by the end of this year.

A whole series of issues were raised by Hon Nick Goiran. I understand that life as an opposition politician involves finding issues with bills; I completely understand that. I also absolutely understand what it is to be a bit of a terrier and to find an issue and really want to drive it down. However, I also think that there should be some whole point in the exercise. There should be some sort of injustice, error or problem that is to be remedied. We had a long dissertation from —

Hon Peter Collier interjected.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: Stop bullying!

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! The minister is making a second reading reply.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I will certainly be keeping it a lot briefer.

We heard a long narrative about the endeavours that the member had to go to to get the submissions that had been made as part of that 2014 review. I think it is important to understand that this was while the member was part of the government of the day. The minister of the day—it might have been Hon Michael Mischin—made a determination that those submissions were to be confidential. That decision was made to enhance, in the minister’s view, the candour of the submissions that would be made. That is understandable. Those having been the goalposts that were set by the previous government, people made their submissions with that as the frame, so of course it is inappropriate, either for the last minister or for the current minister, to seek to release those submissions when they were solicited on the basis of confidentiality. Minister Johnston has told us that confidentiality provisions will generally not be given in relation to submissions in this new rewrite, but that is what happened in the past. This matter has gone through the freedom of information process. It has gone to the Information Commissioner. The position that has been taken by the department since 2014 is, I think, the right one—that these were elicited under the promise of confidentiality and therefore cannot be interrogated any further.

What do we think has been hidden here? It seems quite bizarre. This bill is about increasing the entitlements for the families of workers who have died. Who would have made a submission that would somehow undermine the integrity of this process? I understand it is the case that UnionsWA would have wanted a higher amount of money. It is not unreasonable that the government of the day, and then our government having also followed that, would go with a middle path. I do not actually understand, and I do not think anyone in this chamber was able to understand, what mischief Hon Nick Goiran was trying to track down this quite unfruitful burrow.

Hon Nick Goiran asked a few other questions. He wanted to know why the government went mid-range in settling the determination. It was quite reasonable that we looked around Australia. We looked at the various circumstances and made the decision that the sorts of increases that we are putting in place were appropriate. New South Wales is a much more costly jurisdiction and, not surprisingly, is at the top of the league tables in terms of amounts. We point out, for example, that the average house price in New South Wales is virtually double that of houses in Western Australia. This government’s assessment is that the increase is fair and reasonable. The new lump sum will be 250 per cent of the maximum amount for a fatal injury.

Hon Nick Goiran queried the basis for the level of the child’s allowance. The amount of \$133 represents 10 per cent of the average weekly earnings in Western Australia and more than doubles the current allowance. That is the recommendation. Perhaps the other one that is worth reporting on is the question of the definition of “de facto partner” and why we have adopted the Interpretation Act definition. The current definition within the act applies only to persons who have been living in a de facto relationship with a worker for at least two years prior to the worker’s death. It was the government’s view that this is an outdated definition and denies access to compensation for partners who fall short of the two-year period but who clearly are in a long-term, committed relationship. The current definition will be repealed. It is not necessary to define “de facto partner” in the bill as the term “de facto partner” and indicators of de facto relationships are set out in section 13A of the Interpretation Act 1984. The Interpretation Act 1984 definition is well understood and is applied in most statutes.

Members, I really do genuinely thank members across the house. I noted that Hon Rick Mazza, Hon Alison Xamon and Hon Samantha Rowe all spoke in favour of this bill. We appreciate the very reasonable approach that has generally been taken. I commend the bill to the house.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Committee

The Chair of Committees (Hon Simon O'Brien) in the chair; Hon Alannah MacTiernan (Minister for Regional Development) in charge of the bill.

Clause 1: Short title —

Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN: I just want to start by clarifying a few things, because we received a potted history of this bill and I think it needs to be understood how it has come about. This is not a criticism of the history that has been provided, but there have been some comments regarding the time it has taken for this to be brought before the house and some observations about the review of the legislation that is leading to a broader drafting of either a substantial amendment or what I would expect really to be a rewrite and a fresh Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act of some sort. This process of reviewing the legislation was initiated in 2009 and I think Hon Simon O'Brien was Minister for Commerce at the time. WorkCover WA initiated a two-stage review of the legislation. Stage 1 was completed and resulted in the passage of some amendments in 2011 under the oversight of Hon Simon O'Brien, who was then Minister for Commerce. The second stage was to develop a new statute and that was underway. It is the second stage of the review that was the comprehensive rewrite and was to deal with the outstanding amendments from 2009. It identified a variety of issues with the current legislation and was to result in a re-draft of the act, bringing it up to date. I think it has served reasonably well, with some ups and downs, over the past 45 years; however, drafting styles have changed and, hopefully, the legislation will be in much plainer language and reorganised into something more coherent and sensible, as it has had numerous grafts onto it over the last 45 years. These sorts of things take some time, and it is not right to say, as has been suggested by some, that there was inactivity by the last government. On the contrary, I think WorkCover WA, under the oversight of and with the support of the last government, did a very good job of examining the legislation and consulted very, very widely. I recall something like 66 submissions being received, but it could have been a lot more than that, over the period of the discussion paper, which was issued in October 2013. That discussion paper set out the proposals to re-draft the act as a basis of consultation. By that stage, I was the Minister for Commerce. In late June 2014, WorkCover WA publicly released its "Review of the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981: Final Report", containing some 171 recommendations for inclusion in a new workers' compensation statute, and that was tabled on 26 June 2014. It is unfortunate, and most regrettable, that before we left government we were unable to complete that work, and I am pleased that the current minister has taken up that work in order to proceed further with it, although it has taken him a year to do so. Of course, every government has to deal with its drafting priorities and with the resources available to it, but it was only on 15 February this year that Hon Bill Johnston issued his media release to announce that the government had approved the drafting of a bill to modernise the workers' compensation legislation and to say that it had been based on the final report that had been tabled back in June 2014.

The bill before us is one small element of that overall and comprehensive rewrite. It first appeared in the other place on 1 November last year. It is a very small and discrete element, not inconsequential in its own way, but it still has taken significant time, and that is not a criticism. As I say, it is a fact that sometimes these things require some work, but if the complexities of crafting something suitable to address this small and discrete area has taken that time, I think it is fair to assume that the idea that by the end of this year there will be a comprehensive rewrite that is in a position to be introduced into Parliament is optimistic. It certainly took from March to November last year before this bill could be introduced in the other place. It was not debated and agreed by the other place until 22 February this year. It was introduced into this place on 13 March, which was the first sitting day for this chamber, so it is not as though there has been any delay in dealing with this from the point of view of this chamber's work. Of course, the government has responsibility for its business in this chamber and for deciding the urgency of the bill. It was not until one month later, on 12 April, that it was first brought on for debate in this place. I completed my remarks on it when it was brought up late, I think, on a Thursday, and my remarks were split before and after question time, as I recall, and I completed them in 17 minutes overall. We did not hear of the bill again until 15 May. So there is some delay in the process, but it has not been from this side of the house; it has been from the government's perspective in not considering it sufficiently urgent to bring it on and get it disposed of. I am hoping we can see the passage of this bill.

I thank the honourable minister for the information she has provided about the questions I raised. I was very grateful to her for providing me with an eight-page document that set out some detail about the response to the questions I posed in my second reading contribution. I note that in the summary of her reply there is some quite useful information; and, if she sees fit to do so, I think it would be of assistance for this and future debates if the document could be incorporated into *Hansard* in its entirety, if she is prepared to table it, so the information is available for reference in the future. I have a few questions that arise out of it. One of them will be about the lack of retrospectivity in this legislation. I think it is important that the reasons this sort of legislation and amendments to the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act ought only work prospectively and not retrospectively should be more fully explained in the manner than it is in the explanatory memorandum, because that would be of concern to those who feel they have missed out, even if by a day, in the operation of the legislation. There are sound reasons that it is almost imperative that this legislation operate prospectively, so I think on that score alone

it would be helpful, not only to this government, but also future governments and those responsible for administering this legislation, if those reasons could be set out in full.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I thank the member for those comments. I recognise that this bill goes back to 2009 and that the now Chair of Committees, Hon Simon O'Brien, was able to get some changes in in 2011. I recognise that and I recognise the complexity. As the member would know, when coming into government, there is an enormous amount of work to be absorbed, and getting government underway is a pretty time-demanding task. We appreciate the opposition's cooperation in moving forward with this legislation in a timely manner. When I have a proper copy of them later, I will be happy to table, with leave, the set of answers that I provided to the member previously.

Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN: I thank the minister very much, but perhaps she could, though, for the record, set out the reasons that there is no retrospectivity, because I have a question that deals with that. The question is: since the bill was foreshadowed and introduced in the other place, how many deaths have occurred that would fall under the new provisions if they had been passed, unrealistic though it is, on the day that the bill had been first introduced in November last year?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: Although the government is keen to implement the legislation as quickly as possible and although we are very mindful that there have been workplace fatalities since the time this bill was introduced—we would like nothing more than to be able to provide this more just level of compensation—it is simply not possible in accordance with the practices of good government to apply this retrospectively. It is a fundamental legislative principle of the workers' compensation scheme design that new amendments apply prospectively unless there are exceptional circumstances. This has operated for all workers' compensation amendments since 1981, including the removal of age limits in 2011, the increase of jockeys' weekly compensation entitlements in 2012, and the introduction in 2013 of presumptive laws for firefighters with cancer. The legislation cannot be applied retrospectively for the following reasons. Firstly, changing the law applicable to events that have occurred in the past imposes new rights and obligations on parties that were not foreseen, costed or factored into claim decisions, settlement negotiations or premium assessments. Secondly, retrospectivity will lead to complications if claims have been progressed and concluded when the legislation comes into effect. Thirdly, it is difficult to nominate and justify a retrospective date in the legislation. Fourthly, the operative parts of the bill would have to be restructured to retrospectively apply to some provisions—for example, lump sums—but not to other claims and determination processes. Finally, it would set a precedent for all future legislative proposals.

Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN: I think having that on the record will serve a useful purpose for not only the current government and the manner in which it approaches this, but also future governments.

My other question is about the number of cases since November last year. How many cases, of which WorkSafe is aware, will have fallen outside the operation of this legislation, assuming it is passed and proclaimed today as a cut-off date?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: Since the bill was introduced on 1 November 2017, there have been 11 work-related fatalities. Since 1 November, there have been three claims for deaths that occurred before the bill's introduction.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: During my second reading contribution, I asked the government to clarify eight things. The minister in her reply kindly addressed four of those eight things. Can we have a response to the other matters? To ensure that we facilitate the speedy passage of this legislation this afternoon, I will ask about each of them one at a time and ask for the minister's response. The first dealt with the status of the legislative review. The minister might recall that I read out to the chamber the status as it appeared on the WorkCover website, but it is several months old. Could the minister update the house on the status of the legislative review?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I addressed that, and I addressed that in connection with Hon Michael Mischin's request. I did not think it was necessary to do so twice. But, as we have said, the rewrite is underway, and it is a very complex matter. The minister is aiming to have an exposure draft completed before the end of this year, and full and public consultation will follow that exposure draft.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: The exposure draft being available by the end of this year, is that something that the minister mentioned in her reply?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I believe it is something that I have mentioned today.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I am grateful that we have been able to get on the record during consideration of clause 1 the announcement of the government that an exposure draft will be out before the end of the year, and the news that there will be public consultation on the process and that submissions sought will not be made confidential. I am indebted to the minister for that confirmation.

I want to ask the minister whether any stakeholder submissions that have been provided to date comment on the matters being addressed by this bill.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I will say that I do not intend to repeat matters; I think it is really important that we get on with it. As I indicated earlier, I understood that a submission from the unions, not surprisingly, wanted to meet the peak sum found in the jurisdiction of New South Wales. Secondly, it also appears that one of the stakeholders that provided a confidential submission sought to not have these sums amended; they felt that life insurance was an adequate way of dealing with workplace fatalities. Of course, we disagreed with that. But basically, again, there are no real surprises. It is exactly what we expected. Some people are resisting change and some people are wanting more change. We expect that any side of government will try to get the balance right and we have come in around the middle of the pack.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: If I understand the answer the minister has given, two stakeholder submissions addressed matters that are outlined in the bill—one was UnionsWA and the second was a stakeholder whose details she is not in a position to disclose.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I will not say this again. The way the consultation was framed under the previous government is that it sought confidential submissions. That was sought in order to enhance candour. We will not say anything more about the fact that these were confidential submissions. The advice from the officers present is that they were the two submissions that dealt with this issue.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: According to the advice the minister has received, only two submissions addressed the matters before the chamber. I do not know whether the minister has a copy of the final report at her disposal—one of her advisers might have it. If they do, I ask the minister to turn to page 112 of that document. The minister has indicated to the chamber that there were two submissions. One was from UnionsWA, and the second was from a stakeholder the minister does not want to reveal the name of. Is the second from the Combined Small Business Alliance of Western Australia Inc that is set out at page 112?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: Yes, that is correct. The Combined Small Business Alliance of WA did not support the increased entitlement. I understand there was general support from the other parties. I am trying to understand the advice I have been given. This seems to be a little different from what I was told earlier. Sorry. I refer the member to page 112, which is probably a more reliable description of the case than has just been provided to me. Apparently, all stakeholders support the proposed methodology of apportioning the lump sum between dependants. Three submissions indicated opposition to the proposal that compensation paid not be deducted from the lump sum, and most stakeholders support an increase in entitlement. As I said, UnionsWA wanted a larger increase, and the Combined Small Business Alliance did not support the increased entitlement, indicating that it was mandatory in superannuation schemes and that workers can obtain additional private insurance if that is inadequate.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Which three submissions indicated opposition to the proposal that compensation be paid to the deceased worker?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: Just one more time with feeling! These submissions were attracted on the basis that they would be confidential. Those rules were put in place in 2014. It is the case that the Combined Small Business Alliance of Western Australia agreed to have its name put forward. None of the other three parties agreed to it, and in keeping with the actions taken by the previous government, confirmed by the Information Commissioner, it is not proper for us to breach the confidentiality provided by the previous government.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: The minister is saying to the chamber that one of the three submissions was from the Combined Small Business Alliance of Western Australia. The other two are unknown to the chamber, but are they known to the minister and the government?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I have explained the situation. I honestly have nothing more to add. I think last time I described it quite fully, and I have nothing more to add in that regard.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: If I heard the minister correctly, the express consent of the Combined Small Business Alliance of Western Australia was obtained for its name to be revealed as one of three submitters that indicated opposition. Perhaps let us deal with that first.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: That is the advice I have received.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Excellent. The other two submitters are unable to be known by the chamber, but are known by the government. Was the express consent of UnionsWA also sought for its submission to be revealed at page 112?

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: That's correct.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: That is right? Is the minister able to indicate to us which of the submissions are publicly available?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: None of the submissions is publicly available at this time.

Hon Nick Goiran: Careful.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I understand the authority sought was to name these parties as part of this documentation. I gather the request was not made for the release of the entire report, as the member is well aware from his numerous freedom of information applications.

Hon Nick Goiran: I have not put in even one FOI application, so do not mislead the chamber.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: The member has not submitted an FOI? I apologise for that. As the member is aware —

Several members interjected.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I am sorry, but there are only so many times and so many ways I can put the same piece of information. Submissions were enticed under the banner of confidentiality. We are not going to breach that confidentiality. Two of those parties agreed to have their names attached in this report, explaining their situation; the others have not. I will give out neither the names of the others nor their submissions. I would just love to know what the member is getting at. What is the whole purpose here? That might help us understand what we can do to help the member, because it is absolutely not evident to me.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Is the minister's advice to the chamber that none—zero—of the submissions is publicly available?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I understand in relation to all the submitters on the report—remember, the report was a much larger document that not only dealt with this; right—that many people made submissions, so we have to be careful about which bits we are talking about. In the first instance, there were 66 submitters, and in the second instance, commenting on the report, there were 28. We understand that some of these may well have decided—there are some—to put them up on their websites. That is not something we control and necessarily record. The member is free to look at the 66 different websites and decide whether they have put their submissions up.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Of course, the minister will appreciate that not everyone has a website so it is not possible to go to 66 websites if there are not 66 websites in existence. But rest assured, minister, I have written to the 66 submitters, which is of course another way in which someone might be able to obtain information. The minister has also indicated that another method might be to make an FOI application. I reiterate for the record the minister's false statement earlier suggesting that I have made multiple FOI applications. I state for the record that I have made zero such FOI applications —

Hon Alannah MacTiernan interjected.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I have not finished. Just hold your horses. I want to make sure that members are very clear that when this minister lavishly says to us that I have made FOI applications, that is false with a capital "F".

I am interested in this. Some of the submitters commented on matters before the chamber, but we are of course being told the names of only two of them. In my second reading contribution I made mention of the State Solicitor's Office. I would have thought that that, at the very least, would have been of interest to the government. WorkCover WA has listed the State Solicitor's Office as one of its 66 submitters. Just moments ago the minister asked me to go to the 66 websites. The shadow Attorney General might be able to help me with this. I do not know whether the State Solicitor's Office has a website per se on which it would list its submissions. Let us assume for a moment that it does not. At the end of the day, I have a letter in my possession from the State Solicitor's Office indicating that it did not put in a submission. Has the government been in contact with the State Solicitor's Office to clarify that, or has it been in contact with WorkCover WA to find out why it listed the State Solicitor's Office as one of the 66 submitters, although that very office says that it did not put in a submission?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: No, we will not. If people make a determination, whether they are government agencies or otherwise, to put their submissions onto a website or to post them off to a member, that is their business. It is not relevant to the administration of this act. I apologise to the member. It was not the member who lodged the freedom of information application. It was a private law firm—a plaintiff law firm. I do not know whether the member is familiar with this law firm, but it was a private law firm that put in that FOI application. I do not know whether the member is familiar with the firm or familiar with the work it has been doing. I will leave that to one side.

It is not part of the bill and it is not relevant to the debate here whether people who have made submissions want to put them up publicly. If they do, that is well and good. I have explained to the member why the previous government did this. It was to induce candour. It would be very wrong for us to turn it around and we will not turn it around. If people are happy for their submissions to go up, that would be great, but we will not do it. I know that a law firm seems to have an interest in this happening, but that is irrelevant to the consideration of this bill.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I agree with the minister on that point. The minister has made it perfectly clear that the government will not be releasing those documents. I accept that. I am not pursuing that. I am asking whether the government has contacted the State Solicitor's Office to ascertain why it says it never put in a submission but WorkCover says that it did. Both entities cannot be right. Someone is saying something wrong. I am trying to ascertain who that is.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: The State Solicitor's Office did not put in a submission in the formal sense that, as a lawyer, the member would be aware of. The State Solicitor provides advice along the way and in a continuous method. As issues come up, WorkSafe deals with the State Solicitor. If we are being very technical, it might have been a slight error to describe that as a submission rather than ongoing engagement and advice on the issue. Again, I stress that absolutely zero turns on it. I know that a law firm has great interest in this for some reason, but nothing turns on it regarding the deliberation in this house.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: The minister says that nothing turns on it. The State Solicitor's Office apparently did not provide a submission. The minister said it may have been an error that it was raised and—reading between the lines—that it may have been some form of consultation. Did the State Solicitor's Office comment on this aspect of this bill?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I do not think it was necessarily reading between the lines. I said that the State Solicitor's Office gave advice on a whole range of recommendations, including the recommendations that appear in the bill. As a lawyer, the member would be aware that that advice is privileged.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Of the 66 submitters, we now know that at least one listed did not really put in a submission. Of the 66, how many others did not really put in a submission?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: We do not appear to have the document here with us. As I understand it, an appendix to the report is headed "Stakeholder submissions" and it lists the State Solicitor's Office. The State Solicitor's Office did not make a single submission. It provided ongoing advice on the recommendations. Perhaps there should have been a separate characterisation of that rather than as a submission. The member may be correct. But as I say, nothing turns on it.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Nothing turns on it in the event that the State Solicitor did not say anything of importance to the government about the matters before the chamber. If the State Solicitor's Office said something of importance and specifically commented on the matters before the chamber or maybe gave some warnings to the government, something will turn on it. Of course, we do not know that and the minister, on behalf of the government, has claimed legal professional privilege for that advice, which the minister is entitled to do. I do not know whether the minister consulted with the minister whom she is representing but, nevertheless, that is her responsibility at the moment.

I note with interest that in the appendices that the minister has just referred the chamber to, a number of government departments are listed. For the minister's ease of reference, on page 257 I draw to the minister's attention that the Department of Commerce WorkSafe division, the Department of Education Western Australia, the Department of Health Western Australia, the Department of Mines and Petroleum Western Australia and the Department of the Attorney General Western Australia are mentioned. Out of the 66 stakeholders, five government departments are listed. Is the government prepared to release those submissions publicly?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: We could take up this matter separately. The general principle that we are not moving away from is that these were confidential. I suspect that there probably is not any great sensitivity about it, so I am happy to ask the minister whether those are prepared to be released. I would be very careful about what the member is doing here and his reasons for doing this. I think we need to be careful that we are acting in the public interest in this regard.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I agree with the minister. My comments earlier this week are on the public record. I believe that the process should be transparent. The process is not transparent. The minister has explained the reasons why and I accept those reasons. I accept the reasons that the government is not going to change that.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: Have you been working with that law firm that put in the FOI?

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Which law firm is the minister referring to?

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: There was a law firm, I understand, that put in an FOI.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Unless the minister is prepared to name it on the public record, it would be very difficult for me to guess which law firm in the whole of Western Australia —

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: Are you working with any law firm?

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I am not currently employed by any law firm in Western Australia.

The minister mentioned that she might go away and find out whether these departmental submissions might be able to be made public. The minister mentioned that we needed to be careful about these things. As I said, I believe the process should be transparent. It should have been transparent from the start, but it was not. The current government is not prepared to change that. I respect that it is the government's right to do that, even if I do not agree with it. It is entirely appropriate that the government be prepared to release its own departmental submissions—it would be indefensible if it did not. Can the minister indicate to the chamber whether she will go to the respective minister or ministers and ascertain whether they are prepared to have those submissions tabled in the house; and, if so, when that will be done?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I am prepared to speak to the minister with carriage of this bill to ask him whether he would approach the relevant ministers to do that. As I said, I am happy to do that. I do not think that that should in any way affect the passage of the bill. I urge members to not allow that to happen.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: The minister can rest assured that I am with her on that; there is no need for that to hold it up. The minister will go away and speak to the minister. How will the house be informed about that?

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: I will make a statement to the Parliament when we return.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Magnificent! This is how we make progress, minister. I will move to some further areas that I do not think were addressed in the minister's reply to the second reading debate. Can the minister indicate when the rules and regulations will be ready?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I believe that I did address this issue in response to the member's comments. I will read it again. To minimise any delay in the commencement of the act, the Parliamentary Counsel's Office has been requested to commence drafting the necessary subsidiary legislation while the bill is progressing through the Legislative Council. The subordinate legislation is not complex and will take approximately two weeks to finalise. The intention is for the amendment regulations and the arbitration rules to come into effect at the same time as the amendment act is proclaimed. The proclamation, notice and drafting of regulations will be committed to Executive Council. I believe it will be about two weeks from the proclamation of the bill.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: When was the Parliamentary Counsel's Office instructed to commence the drafting?

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: Some weeks ago.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: If it takes two weeks to conclude the drafting and it was asked for some weeks ago, are the rules and regulations now ready?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: As is the practice of government generally, before that process is concluded, parliamentary counsel will wait to see that this legislation actually passes the house. They will then conclude it. It is expected that it will be some two weeks after the bill has been assented to.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: But is the drafting of the rules and regulations concluded, all bar waiting for this bill to be passed?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: It is underway. I will say it once again, because there is no point in continuing to repeat these things. The instructions were given some weeks ago. It is anticipated that the drafting of the rules and regulations will be concluded within a few weeks of the bill being assented to.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I understand that with the lump sum to be payable to dependant partners and children, the apportionment between them will be set out in statute. Is that set out in this bill or will it be set out in the rules and regulations?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I am happy to deal with those matters when we get to the relevant clause.

Hon Nick Goiran: Which clause is it?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: It relates to clause 11 of the bill and specifically to clause 7 of the proposed schedule.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I thank the minister for referring us to that. That is on page 17 of the bill under clause 11. It comes under clause 7 of proposed schedule 1A. Will clause 7 of what will be schedule 1A be dependent at all upon the rules and regulations that are currently being drafted?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: No, it is not. I do not think it is appropriate for us to deal with every clause under the short title. I think the clause-specific questions would be better dealt with when we come to the relevant clauses.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I am happy to defer those questions until we get to clause 11. As I understand it, there is a proposal to increase the amount to \$562 303. The minister touched on that briefly in her reply to the second reading debate to explain why it is that we are going for the mid-pack. The minister mentioned that New South Wales has higher house prices than us. Is that the extent to which analysis was done to determine why Western Australia would be mid-pack?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I will deal with that under clause 4.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: There is also a proposal to increase the child's allowance from \$58.90 to \$133. I asked during my contribution to the second reading debate what was the basis for that decision, particularly when one compares it with the figures in New South Wales, which is \$148.80, and Queensland, which is \$148.25. Can the minister indicate to the chamber why \$133 was chosen as the new figure for the child's allowance?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I will deal with that when we get to the proposed schedule under clause 11.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Is any of the child's allowance of \$133 at all dependent on the rules and regulations that are being drafted by Parliamentary Counsel's Office?

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: We will deal with that when we get to that clause. This is the short title.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: If any proposal was made by this chamber to lift the amount above the mid-pack, above \$562 303, which would be consistent with what we are told UnionsWA asked for, would that need to be dealt with under any part of the bill prior to clause 4?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: Not before clause 4.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: In the same vein, with regard to the increase of the child's allowance, if members of the chamber wanted to increase it above the \$133 proposed by the government, perhaps to something like in New South Wales and Queensland, which are both approximately \$148, would any clauses prior to clause 11, as I understand the minister referred us to, need to be amended for that to take effect?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: No, I understand.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: In the minister's second reading reply, she touched on and explained in part why the government is deleting the definition of de facto. According to my notes, she said that the government's view is that it is outdated and is as applies in most statutes, and that is why it is repealing it. Why is the government not ensuring that the definition is therefore consistent with all statutes?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: We will deal with that under clause 4.

Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN: I have a couple of questions about the indexing formulae and the like and what is proposed. I understand some potential changes to awards will be done by way of reference to the wage price index, but changes to the funeral allowance, for example, will be done with regard to the consumer price index and I would like to ask about the manner in which that is going to be achieved. I do not want to jump the gun here if the minister would prefer that we deal with it on the individual clauses to which it is relevant.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: Yes, I think, if we could.

Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN: What I would ask, though, so I do not overlook them, is which clauses should I wait for to raise those questions? Perhaps the minister would be able to help me out here. There are provisions, for example, for the changing of formulae by way of regulations. I presume those are the ones we are looking at and they would be under proposed clause 9 of proposed schedule 1A on page 21. Would that be one of them? Also, there are provisions for changing the children's allowance and the entitlement allowance. If the minister could give me some guidance and then I am happy to wait until those bits come up before we test those.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I am advised that these appear in this new schedule. Clause 11, as the member has correctly identified, inserts a new schedule. These are included in various places within that new schedule that will be inserted by clause 11. In particular, proposed clause 5 of that new schedule deals with the indexation of the child allowance and proposed clause 9 deals with the indexation of the funeral allowance. We will deal with those at clause 11.

Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN: The other one is the changes to lump sum compensation. If I understand the operation correctly, the bill introduces a proportion of 250 per cent on the lump sum but makes no alteration about how that lump sum compensation is to be calculated, which is already in the current legislation. Could the minister just confirm whether that understanding is correct—that no new formula is being prescribed or anything of that fashion?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: No, no new formula is being prescribed. We can deal with that when we get to that new schedule, if the member would like. But I am advised that there is no new formula.

Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN: If I can assist, in case the information needs to be obtained, what I would be interested in learning in due course—this is with a view to being helpful so that the minister is not caught off guard—is the impact on premiums. The minister has said that it is calculated to be around 0.7 per cent, but I would like a bit more information about the usual sorts of businesses that are paying premiums towards workers' compensation and what 0.7 per cent is likely to mean to most businesses in terms of money—\$100, \$1 000, \$10 or whatever it happens to be. I would like some statistics on the sorts of businesses, the means and the averages of workers' compensation premium payments, and the likely effect on businesses of an increase of what is proposed. We do not have to deal with that now, but when we get to those particular parts of the bill.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I have one final question, which I overlooked earlier. I asked during my second reading contribution whether there had been any further consultation with stakeholders about these aspects of the bill. Of course, helpfully, earlier this afternoon we identified which of the 66 submissions dealt with the matters before us in this bill. We have gone through that, we have identified those who are for and against, and who has a different view. Some are known and named because they have given their express consent to that; others have not and the minister has explained why. Helpfully, she has indicated that she will speak to the minister about the possibility of releasing the governmental submissions and making a ministerial statement at a later date. I thank the minister for all of that. Subsequent to that time, since this bill has been drafted or as it was being drafted, was there consultation with any particular stakeholders—for example, any of those 66 that are listed in appendix 4?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I understand not while the bill was being developed.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Just so that we are all talking the same language, minister, there was not while the bill was being developed? There is of course a process whereby cabinet will authorise the drafting of a bill and then it will approve the bill to be introduced into Parliament. Is that what we are talking about—the process of the bill being developed?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I understand there has been no further consultation. A decision was made that this matter needed to be acted on quickly and it could not wait until the full package of work was done. I am advised that this part was therefore extracted from the final report and a decision made that we would progress it. I do not think there is anything I can add to that.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: The final report was released in 2014, so was that the last time there was any consultation on the aspects before us. Has there been no consultation with any of the stakeholders since that time? That is what I want clarification on.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: That is correct. There is no doubt though, that, obviously, Minister Johnston would have been talking to a raft of people within the sector who would have expressed concern that there had not been progress on this matter. Of course, we are very mindful that fatalities continue. I would not want to suggest that any minister did not have conversations with stakeholders, but they were not consultations about the specifics of this Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Amendment Bill. This is very much the work that was completed in 2014 and the decision was made to make progress on that and take out this element because it needed to be dealt with urgently.

Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN: When did cabinet give approval to draft and when did it give approval to print the current bill?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: We do not have those dates with us.

Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN: We will probably have a break for questions without notice shortly and the afternoon tea recess, so perhaps that information could be found out during the recess.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 2 and 3 put and passed.

Clause 4: Section 5 amended —

Hon NICK GOIRAN: The minister kindly indicated that she would deal with the questions I had on clause 4. The first is about the definition of “de facto partner”. The minister indicated in her second reading reply that the Interpretation Act is applied in most statutes. Which statutes does it not apply to and why has the government made a decision to apply it to this definition while leaving the other definitions of de facto partner open in Western Australia?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I think that is an unreasonable request. We have before us this bill, not every other piece of legislation in the state that may not have any connection with it. This legislation contained a definition of de facto, which, in our view, was outdated and could, quite meaningfully and profitably, be deleted and we could simply rely on the interpretation that is found within the Interpretation Act. I have no doubt that as we go through and amend other legislation that has what we consider a non-contemporary definition of de facto, those changes will be made. But, of course, within the framing of this bill, it was not the job of the drafters, nor of government, to do an entire review of the legislation in this state and find every act that has a definition of de facto. It is completely and utterly irrelevant for the purposes of this act. For the purposes of this act, we looked at the definition and found that it was not adequate to deal with some of the very real cases that have come up in the last couple of years. We therefore determined to delete the specific reference in this legislation and go with the standard definition in the Interpretation Act. I am sure that as new legislation comes through, and as we amend other legislation where there is a different definition of de facto, we will find changes. Who knows, at some point, the Attorney may determine that he will do an omnibus amendment to legislation, but we do not know that.

Committee interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 2999.]

Sitting suspended from 4.15 to 4.30 pm

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

PREMIER — LONDON VISIT AND CHINA VISIT

400. Hon PETER COLLIER to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

I refer to the minister's response to question without notice 379 asked on Wednesday, 16 May 2018.

- (1) Why was Nobel Laureate Professor Barry Marshall not included in the original delegation list as provided in question without notice 221?
- (2) What criteria were used to select the tourism operators who joined the delegation?
- (3) Who selected the tourism operators who attended the delegation?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) Professor Barry Marshall travelled separately as he was in Asia en route to China. The Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation met the marginal cost of his participation in Shanghai, which included delivering a keynote speech at the research collaboration luncheon on Monday, 13 November 2018.
- (2)–(3) It is requested that the honourable member direct these parts of the question to the Minister for Tourism.

FOREIGN BUYERS SURCHARGE RATE — 2018–19 STATE BUDGET

401. Hon PETER COLLIER to the minister representing the Treasurer:

I refer to the foreign buyers surcharge rate increase announced in the 2018–19 budget.

- (1) What is the forecast number of properties that will attract the foreign buyers surcharge for the years 2018–19, 2019–20, 2020–21 and 2021–22?
- (2) What is the forecast median house price that will attract the foreign buyers surcharge for the years 2018–19, 2019–20, 2020–21 and 2021–22?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for some notice of the question.

- (1) Based on Foreign Investment Review Board data, the Department of Treasury estimates that around 1 000 properties a year will attract the foreign buyers surcharge. This represents less than two per cent of residential property transactions in Western Australia.
- (2) Median property price data is not available. However, the estimated revenue from the foreign buyers surcharge, combined with the estimated number of property transactions expected to attract the surcharge each year, implies an average property of around \$500 000.

OFFICE OF THE INFORMATION COMMISSIONER — COMPLAINTS

402. Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN to the Leader of the House representing the Attorney General:

I refer to the Office of the Information Commissioner and its management of applications for external review—namely, complaints.

- (1) How many applications for external review were received by the OIC in the previous 12 months and how many of these applications were reviewed?
- (2) How many external review cases are presently under investigation by the OIC and how does this compare with the case load of the previous five years?
- (3) Is the Attorney General aware that the OIC is advising complainants and applicants that increased case volume and insufficient agency resourcing are contributing to delays in the resolution of cases?
- (4) What steps, if any, did the government take in the recent budget to improve agency resourcing and the timeliness of applications for external review?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) In the 12-month period from 16 May 2017 to 15 May 2018, the OIC received 145 applications for external review. In the same period, 67 external review matters were finalised.
- (2) As at 30 April 2018, 72 review applications were on hand and subject to investigation. As at 30 June 2017, there were 54; as at 30 June 2016, there were 57; as at 30 June 2015, there were 69; as at 30 June 2014, there were 62; and as at 30 June 2013, there were 107.
- (3) I am advised that upon receipt of complaints, all complainants are advised that the OIC is currently dealing with a high number of complaints.
- (4) I refer to note 1 on page 114 of the 2018–19 budget, which acknowledges that a temporary reduction in FTE contributed to a delay in finalised external review cases. I table that extract from the budget.

[See paper 1385.]

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION — 2018–19 STATE BUDGET

403. Hon DONNA FARAGHER to the Minister for Education and Training:

I refer to the 2017–18 and 2018–19 state budgets, specifically the total appropriations provided to the Department of Education to deliver services.

- (1) Can the minister confirm that in the 2017–18 state budget, the government forecast total appropriations provided to deliver services of \$4.11 billion in 2018–19; \$4.12 billion in 2019–20; and \$4.2 billion in

2020–21; and that in the 2018–19 state budget, these appropriations have been reduced to \$4.04 billion in 2018–19; \$4.02 billion in 2019–20; and \$4.09 billion in 2020–21?

- (2) If yes to (1), can the minister confirm that this amounts to a reduction in spending on education services of an estimated \$281 million over this period?
- (3) If yes to (1), what are the savings that will be implemented by the department to meet this budget reduction?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

- (1) Yes.
- (2)–(3) A number of changes have been made to the department’s budget since the release of the 2017–18 budget, as listed in the “Spending Changes” table on pages 291 and 292 of volume 1 of the 2018–19 budget paper No 2. In addition, other revisions have been made to the department’s budget as a result of changes in commonwealth funding, which did not impact the department’s total cost of services. I draw the honourable member’s attention to the total cost of services, I think, on page 291 of the budget paper.

CHILD PROTECTION — CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE — ROEBOURNE

404. Hon NICK GOIRAN to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

I refer to the minister’s answer to my question without notice 382 asked on 16 May 2018 in which she informed the house that the Premier is aware if any of the 184 victims of child sex offences in Roebourne are currently residing with a person either charged or convicted with one or more child sex offences. How many of the victims was the Premier told are residing with such a person?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

I am afraid the honourable member has misinterpreted the answer given on 16 May 2018. To clarify for his understanding: yes, the Premier has discussed the plight of the children with the Minister for Child Protection. That is why we have the West Pilbara Plan. No, the Premier is not aware of any victims residing with a person either charged or convicted with one or more child sex offences.

Should the honourable member have any information about any child or children who may be at risk of harm, the Premier would ask him to take the appropriate action to report these concerns to the Department of Communities and/or the Western Australia Police Force.

CARNARVON COMMUNITY COLLEGE — REDEVELOPMENT

405. Hon JACQUI BOYDELL to the Minister for Education and Training:

I refer to the minister’s decision to cut \$13.2 million over the forward estimates from the redevelopment of Carnarvon Community College.

- (1) Can the minister guarantee that all facets of the college previously funded will be delivered?
- (2) If no to (1), which facets of the college redevelopment will not be delivered?
- (3) If yes to (1), will the minister outline reasons for the reduction in funding?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question. I make the point that I note I have made public comments to local media in Carnarvon about this. I know that the Minister for Regional Development was asked this question at a budget function, I think the day after the budget, and the answer has been the same.

- (1) Stage 1 of the works at Carnarvon Community College, additional primary facilities, were completed in January 2014 at a cost of \$8.8 million. Stage 2, finalising the new primary facilities, was completed in December 2017. This included three teaching blocks, administration, a refurbished classroom block, and cafeteria. Stage 2 also included sewerage works that were initially planned for delivery in stage 3. The budget for this stage was \$17.6 million. Stage 3, new secondary facilities, is under construction and is due to be completed in April 2019. Stage 3 includes a sports hall, performing arts, science, food technology, and IT and classroom blocks, as well as general refurbishments. The budget for stage 3 is \$26.55 million.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) A favourable tender process for the second and third stages of development for Carnarvon Community College meant \$12 million from the previous budget allocation was no longer required for the works. There has been no reduction in the scope of works.

METRONET — COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS — TENDER PROCESS

406. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

I refer to Chinese companies ZTE and Huawei who have expressed an interest in contracting for works associated with Metronet.

- (1) Have any members of cabinet met with representatives from either of these companies?
- (2) If yes to (1), will the Premier please provide dates, location and attendees?
- (3) Have representatives of these companies ever attended any Labor Party fundraising events?
- (4) Have donations been received by the Labor Party from either of these companies?

The PRESIDENT: Leader of the House, I do not think the last couple of parts of the question are in the purview of the minister responsible, so you might just want to respond to the first part of the question.

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(2) We are unable to provide an answer in the time provided. The member might appreciate that we would need to check with every minister and in the time provided we have been unable to do that. It is requested that the member put the question on notice.
- (3)–(4) I do have a response that reflects, effectively, what the President has just said about these parts of the question; that is, questions regarding fundraising should be directed to the political party concerned.

RECREATIONAL FISHING LICENCE FEES

407. Hon RICK MAZZA to the minister representing the Minister for Fisheries:

I refer to the state government raising recreational fishing licence fees by \$5 in last week's budget, the second time in 12 months.

- (1) Did the state government consult with Recfishwest prior to the \$5 licence fee increase across all licence categories?
- (2) If no to (1), why not?
- (3) Why was another recreational fishing licence fee increase necessary when WA was already paying the highest recreational fishing fees in the country?
- (4) Were any other revenue raising options in the sector considered before recreational fishing licence fees were increased for a second time?
- (5) What was the cost of managing WA recreational fishing in 2017?
- (6) How much revenue was raised by the 2017 recreational fishing licence fee increase?
- (7) Will the increase in fees be accompanied by an increase in service provided to WA recreational fishers?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. The Minister for Fisheries has provided the following answer.

- (1)–(2) Budget matters are cabinet-in-confidence and announced by the Treasurer through the budget speech.
- (3) The fee increase was necessary to ensure that recreational fishers in WA continue to have access to a world-class, sustainably managed resource. There will be no further increase to fishing licence fees over this term of government. WA recreational fishers do not pay the highest licence fees in the country. Unlike Victoria, WA does not require a licence for line fishing off the beach or coastal jetties. Recreational fishing licence fee revenue in 2016–17 covered less than half the cost of managing recreational fishing in Western Australia.
- (4) Yes.
- (5) In the 2016–17 financial year, the expenditure on recreational fishing was \$17.5 million.
- (6) It is estimated that the \$5 fee increase in July last year has resulted in an additional \$600 000 increase in revenue.

PROSPECTING LICENCE APPLICATIONS

408. Hon ROBIN SCOTT to the minister representing the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:

I refer to a letter dated 3 May 2018 from the regional mining registrar in Kalgoorlie that is addressed to the Kalgoorlie Ore Treatment Company Pty Ltd concerning prospecting licence application 25/2526.

- (1) Can the minister explain why this company is being asked to complete unnecessary paperwork to explain whether it had prior knowledge of the former tenement P25/2071, which had clearly expired prior to the applicant marking out and applying for the land?

- (2) What is the specific relevance under the Mining Act of requesting information from applicants who mark out and apply for tenements, given the former tenement had clearly expired and any person could have marked out and applied for the tenement should they have wished to do so?
- (3) Can the minister state how the applicant may have had prior knowledge that the tenement P25/2071 was going to expire?
- (4) Given that tenements expire virtually every day throughout the state, can the minister state the time frame and number of days after expiry of any tenement in which the departmental letter referred to above will not be issued?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. The Minister for Mines and Petroleum has provided the following answer.

- (1) The letter issued by the regional mining registrar, Kalgoorlie, is a standard letter issued by all mining registrars if there is any doubt as to whether there has been a breach of section 45(2) of the Mining Act 1978. The mining registrar is obliged to satisfy himself that a related entity has not applied for the relinquished prospecting licence. In this case, prospecting licence 25/2071 expired at midnight on 4 February 2018 and the ground was re-pegged within a few hours of that expiry at 2.28 am on 5 February 2018 as application for prospecting licence 25/2526 by Kalgoorlie Ore Treatment Company Pty Ltd.
- (2) Refer to the answer to (1).
- (3) Any person can obtain reports from the department's Mineral Titles Online system on expiry dates for mining tenements.
- (4) The mining registrar will not issue the said letter when a prospecting or exploration licence is marked out or applied for after a three-month period.

POLICE — SEIZED CANNABIS PLANTS

409. Hon AARON STONEHOUSE to the minister representing the Minister for Police:

I note the recent seizure of a significant quantity of mature cannabis plants from a rural property in Anketell, in the South Metropolitan Region, and reports, including those in *The West Australian* of 20 January 2018, that in spite of those seized plants being under heavy police guard, a large number of them were subsequently lost or stolen. I also note that the WA Police Force has now had just under four months to investigate this incident.

- (1) Has an internal WA police inquiry been conducted into the events of Thursday, 18 January, and the circumstances under which a large quantity of police evidence went missing?
- (2) If yes to (1), what conclusions have been drawn?
- (3) If no to (1), why not?
- (4) What percentage of the overall haul is believed to have been lost and what was its estimated street value?
- (5) Is it true that a total of three police cars and six officers were actively guarding the plants at the time of their loss?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question. The following information has been provided to me by the Minister for Police.

The Western Australia Police Force advise that the incident occurred on Thursday, 11 January 2018. The WA Police Force further advises the following.

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The investigation did not identify any unprofessional conduct in relation to the way the crime scene was managed or guarded.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) Approximately 61 per cent of the cannabis plants were not recovered on site. The quality of the plants is not known and it is not possible to provide an opinion on street value.
- (5) The number of officers actively guarding the scene varied at times during the incident, as a result of shift changeovers and operational requirements.

PEMBERTON CAMP SCHOOL — LAND OWNERSHIP

410. Hon DIANE EVERS to the Minister for Education and Training:

I refer to the Pemberton camp school site.

- (1) Does the government own all the land on which the Pemberton camp school operates?
- (2) If no to (1), how much of the land on which the camp school operates does the government own?
- (3) Can the minister confirm that the land and school camp were originally owned and developed by the local community, and entrusted to state government in the 1970s to be managed by the education department?
- (4) If yes to (3), can the minister explain why the community was not involved to its satisfaction in the decision to invite organisations and businesses to register interest in leasing and operating the camp school?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

- (1)–(2) The Pemberton camp school is on crown land reserved for educational purposes and it is 0.95 of a hectare. There is an access road and other minor facilities that encroach on an adjacent lot. Negotiations over the acquisition of this land, 2 850 square metres, stalled in 2010.
- (3) The history of the camp indicates both education and community involvement in the development of the camp. The original site was excised from the national park in 1951. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Department of Education purchased the rest of the site from Bunnings Brothers. The department understands that there have been contributions from government, schools, community and businesses for infrastructure.
- (4) The procurement process has been developed to optimise the continuation of all campsite operations.

NON-GOVERNMENT HUMAN SERVICES SECTOR — INDEXATION POLICY

411. Hon ALISON XAMON to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

I refer to question without notice 377 about the Western Australian government indexation policy for the non-government human services sector.

- (1) What was the rationale for changing the calculation for indexation of service agreements from 80 per cent of the annual increase of the Perth wages price index and 20 per cent of the annual increase of the Perth consumer price index to 100 per cent consumer price index by the 2018–19 financial year?
- (2) Given the significant financial burden this change is placing on the non-government sector, will the government commit to reinstating the previous calculation of 80 per cent WPI and 20 per cent CPI?
- (3) If yes to (2), when?
- (4) If no to (2), why not?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I have checked all the files. I do not have the answer and I do not recall seeing it. I get the full list of questions when they are lodged and I do not recall seeing it earlier today.

Hon Alison Xamon: I sent it yesterday.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I do not recall seeing it yesterday, either. If the answer comes in before the end of question time, I will make sure that I provide it.

COMMUNITY PROTECTION (OFFENDER REPORTING) ACT —
REGISTERED SEX OFFENDER COMPLIANCE**412. Hon CHARLES SMITH to the minister representing the Minister for Police:**

I refer to the Community Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004.

- (1) How many people are currently registered as sex offenders in WA?
- (2) How many registered sex offenders as of today are wanted for either —
 - (a) failure to comply with their reporting obligations;
 - (b) providing false or misleading information to police;
 - (c) location or whereabouts is not known to police; or
 - (d) breaching the terms of their release orders?
- (3) How many inquiries have been submitted to the Community Protection Western Australia access registered sex offender information website in the last 12 months?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The following information has been provided by the Minister for Police:

- (1)–(3) The Western Australia Police Force advises that currently 3 491 reportable offenders are registered in Western Australia in accordance with the Community Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004. Of these, the number of registered reportable offenders who have either failed to comply with their reporting obligations or provided false or misleading information and their current whereabouts are unknown to police is 19. The Western Australia Police Force routinely posts the details of those sex offenders who do not comply with their conditions and deems their whereabouts as unknown. The number of missing offenders on the Community Protection offender website varies from time to time. It has been greater than 25 in the past two years. The reasons for that also vary and can include the timing of police visits, proactive police operations aimed at verifying personal information provided by offenders, and movements of offenders in remote and regional areas. Police have a dedicated team of officers who continually make efforts to locate and charge offenders who have been listed as missing or who breach their reporting obligations. In addition, there have been 6 091 inquiries submitted to the Community Protection Western Australia access registered sex offender information website in the last 12 months.

SHARKS — HAZARD MITIGATION — DRUM LINES — NEW SOUTH WALES GOVERNMENT OFFER**413. Hon COLIN TINCKNELL to the minister representing the Minister for Fisheries:**

I refer to the offer yesterday by the New South Wales government to supply several Shark-Management-Alert-in-Real-Time drum lines to WA free of charge.

- (1) Does the government plan on taking up the NSW government's very generous offer?
 (2) If not, why not?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. The Minister for Fisheries provides the following information.

- (1)–(2) The WA government has not received an offer in relation to drum lines from the New South Wales government. We have, however, seen some media reports on the issue. We have contacted the New South Wales minister's office seeking clarification.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF DARLING RANGE — BY-ELECTION**414. Hon SIMON O'BRIEN to the minister representing the Minister for Electoral Affairs:**

- (1) How much will it cost to run a by-election in Darling Range?
 (2) Has the Western Australian Electoral Commission received this funding in its 2018–19 budget allocation or will the amount be a variation?
 (3) If this cost was not included in the 2018–19 budget, why not?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. The Minister for Electoral Affairs has provided the following information.

- (1) The cost is estimated to be in the vicinity of \$250 000 to \$300 000.
 (2)–(3) It is not usual practice that the commission's annual budget include an allowance for possible by-elections. Funding arrangements are made when the writ for a by-election is issued. In the case of the district of Darling Range, this has not yet occurred.

PUBLIC SECTOR COMMISSION — INDEPENDENT REVIEW**415. Hon TJORN SIBMA to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Public Sector Management:**

I refer to the response provided to my question without notice 373 on 15 May 2018, concerning the review of the Public Sector Commission.

- (1) Has this appointment followed State Supply Commission policies; and, if so, which ones; and, if not, why not?
 (2) Is Ms McGregor on a common-use agreement on the State Supply Commission website?
 (3) Why has the Premier's own department engaged a consultant to undertake a review of what is an independent agency?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(3) Carmel McGregor Consulting Pty Ltd was engaged in accordance with State Supply Commission policies. The ministerial contracts for service engagement process was utilised for this engagement, including a review by the ministerial merit panel. Details of the contract are published on Tenders WA website and costs will be reported in the six-monthly reports on the engagement of consultants. The Department of the Premier and Cabinet is the department principally assisting the Minister for Public Sector Management and is facilitating the review on behalf of the Premier. The Public Sector Commission supports the review.

CORRUPTION AND CRIME COMMISSION REPORT — PRISONER SUPERVISION

416. Hon JIM CHOWN to the minister representing the Minister for Corrective Services:

I refer to parliamentary question without notice 388 regarding the Corruption and Crime Commission's "Report into inadequate supervision of prisoners whilst in the community".

- (1) Please detail the developed action plan as stated in the answer to parliamentary question 388?
 (2) Please also detail the actions underway to mitigate drug incursions into Western Australian prisons?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

The Department of Justice advises the following.

- (1) The details of the action plan cannot be provided due to security reasons.
 (2) The department has implemented a number of initiatives to reduce the supply and use of drugs and alcohol in prison. In response to the Western Australian Auditor General's report "Minimising Drugs and Alcohol in Prisons", tabled in Parliament in November 2017, the Department of Justice is currently developing a drug and alcohol strategy specific to prisons, which addresses supply control, demand reduction, harm reduction and monitoring and innovation; reviews its procedure and legal powers for searching and drug testing to ensure that processes are consistent and robust and current penalties and sanctions are an effective deterrent to the trafficking of drugs in prisons; improves the way prisoners are drug tested, which will result in more frequent and consistent testing, and a trial of staff and drug and alcohol testing was recently completed and will inform future testing of staff; and undertakes a trial of new drug detection technology, which includes instruments which are less invasive, more difficult to adulterate and more resource efficient than those currently used.

In December 2017, the department commenced Operation Contra, which was a three-month concentrated statewide search program aimed at reducing the volume of drugs and other contraband from entering and being trafficked within custodial facilities. In addition, Operation Contra identified ways in which search practices could be enhanced and improved. The creation of dedicated alcohol and drug rehabilitation prisons at Wandoo Reintegration Facility and Casuarina Prison will also address demand as well as treatment approaches for prisoners.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES — BUSHFIRE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

417. Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS to the minister representing the Minister for Emergency Services:

I refer to the minister's announcement on 13 April of a rural fire division within the Department of Fire and Emergency Services and the development of a Bushfire Centre of Excellence, both of which are to be co-located, according to comments the minister made on ABC radio at the time of the announcement and the interview conducted this morning on radio ABC South West and Great Southern with the state secretary of the United Firefighters Union, Lea Anderson.

- (1) Why did Ms Anderson announce that the proposed site of the new Bushfire Centre of Excellence is to be in Darlington, which is in the Shire of Mundaring and in the state electorate of Darling Range?
 (2) Is Ms Anderson now a spokesperson for the minister or has she simply confirmed a poorly kept secret?
 (3) Will the minister now confirm the proposed location of the proposed Bushfire Centre of Excellence and the rural fire division?
 (4) Will the government be making its own official announcement of the location and will this announcement be made during the Darling Range by-election?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The Minister for Emergency Services advises the following.

- (1)–(4) The minister has requested the Department of Fire and Emergency Services to develop a business case and project definition plan for the Bushfire Centre of Excellence, including options for its location. Once complete, this will be taken to cabinet for consideration.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Do you want to continue? The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

GOLD ROYALTY — 2018–19 STATE BUDGET

418. Hon PETER COLLIER to the minister representing the Treasurer:

What were the forecast gold price and forecast volumes used to calculate the gold royalties on page 85 of volume 3 of the 2018–19 budget papers for the following years —

- (a) 2018–19;
- (b) 2019–20;
- (c) 2020–21; and
- (d) 2021–22?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for some notice of the question.

- (a) The gold price assumption was \$US1 356 per troy ounce, or \$A1 762 per troy ounce. The gold volumes assumption was 7.3 million troy ounces.
- (b) The gold price assumption was \$US1 395 per troy ounce, or \$A1 806 per troy ounce. The gold volume assumption was 6.9 million troy ounces.
- (c) The gold price assumption was \$US1 437 per troy ounce, or \$A1 857 per troy ounce. The gold volume assumption was 6.1 million troy ounces.
- (d) The gold price assumption \$US1 479 per troy ounce, or \$A1 911 per troy ounce. The gold volume assumption was five million troy ounces.

CLEVELAND–CLIFFS — KOOLYANOBING

419. Hon ROBIN SCOTT to the minister representing the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:

I refer to a story in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* today—Thursday, 17 May—stating that the minister was “blindsided” by the closure of the Cleveland–Cliffs Koolyanobbing iron ore mine site.

- (1) Was the minister not aware that Koolyanobbing was closing down at the end of the year anyway?
- (2) Can the minister confirm that concerns were raised in Parliament about the future of jobs at the Esperance port should the Koolyanobbing mine site close, along with the nearby Carina mine site?
- (3) Will the minister confirm that he had the power and authority to grant permission to Mineral Resources Ltd to create two new mine sites in the Yilgarn region, therefore maintaining mining jobs and Esperance port jobs?
- (4) Does the minister expect to be blindsided again in the near future?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. The Minister for Mines and Petroleum provides the following information.

- (1)–(2) The minister was made aware that Cleveland–Cliffs’ Koolyanobbing iron ore operation would be closing and ceasing production at the end of 2018. The minister’s comments to the media were in reference to Cliffs bringing forward the timing of the closure of the operation to June, from the original time line provided by Cliffs. The McGowan government is working diligently with all interested parties to facilitate an agreement regarding the future of operations at Koolyanobbing.
- (3) The minister has various powers under the Mining Act 1978; however, the Minister for Environment decided, on environmental reasons, not to approve mining at the Bungalbin East and Jackson JS sites under the Environmental Protection Act 1986.
- (4) The Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety provides regular briefings and updates about projects and industry developments.

AUSTRALIND — PASSENGER PLATFORMS UPGRADE*Question without Notice 397 — Supplementary Information*

HON STEPHEN DAWSON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Environment) [5.04 pm]: I gave Hon Colin Holt an undertaking to provide costings in relation to question without notice 397, asked yesterday. I can confirm the budgeted breakdown is: Yarloop, design consultancy, \$80 000; Arc Infrastructure, cost allowance, \$50 000; and construction, \$445 000—for a total budget of \$575 000.

INFRASTRUCTURE — FEDERAL FUNDING*Question without Notice 378 — Answer Advice*

HON STEPHEN DAWSON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Environment) [5.04 pm]: I would like to provide an answer to Hon Peter Collier's question without notice 378, asked yesterday, which I seek leave to have incorporated into *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The following material was incorporated —

-
- (1) Yes. The State Government provided input to the annual Infrastructure Australia, Infrastructure Priority List
- (2) I table the attached information.
- (3) Please refer to the 2018–19 Commonwealth Budget.
- (4) Please refer to the 2018–19 State Budget.
- (5) For METRONET and the Joondalup Hospital Redevelopment the \$729 million and \$159 million Federal Government contribution detailed in the funding offer letter from the Federal Treasurer—upon which the 2018–19 Budget is predicated—is on the basis that the projects will be completed. Prior to the cash-flowing of these projects and the State contribution being accounted for, full business case processes are required which will detail costs beyond the current Federal Government current contributions. I point out that the Government will continue to negotiate with the Commonwealth Government and will seek to maximise the Commonwealth's contribution.
- For the Hospital Infrastructure GST top-up the Commonwealth is providing \$158 million for Joondalup Health Campus (JHC) redevelopment, \$20.3 million for Royal Perth Hospital (RPH) projects and \$10.6 million the Osborne Park Hospital project. The 2018–19 Budget has provisioned the full Commonwealth contribution for JHC pending completion of the business case. It also includes funding of \$24.9 million for the Osborne Park Hospital Project of which \$14.3 million is the State contribution. For the RPH projects the 2018–19 Budget includes \$11.8 million towards construction of the Mental Health Observation Unit for which the Commonwealth contribution is \$4 million. The remaining \$16.3 million in Commonwealth funding for RPH projects along with the State component will be allocated once the business cases are finalised and considered by Government in future Budgets.
- For the Roads projects booked in the 2018–19 Budget, the Bunbury Outer Ring road requires a 20% contribution from the State Government of the total \$93.8 million investment to commence works from 2018–19 to 2021–22 and for the Stephenson Avenue extension the Commonwealth has provided \$65 million between 2018–19 and 2020–21, the State Government previously provided \$60 million towards the project as part of the 2017–18 Budget.
- All road projects listed in the Commonwealth Budget require consideration of business cases and further negotiation with the Federal Government on the quantum of their contribution, before the State Government is willing to commit funding to these projects.
- Finally, the \$140 million in Commonwealth funding (in addition to a concessional loan of up to \$50 million) has been committed towards the cost of the Myalup–Wellington Water project over the forward estimates, by the Commonwealth and is contingent on a \$35 million State Government contribution, which is already budgeted for.
- (6) See (5).
-

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 1097 AND 1098*Papers Tabled*

Papers relating to answers to questions on notice were tabled by **Hon Stephen Dawson (Minister for Environment)** and **Hon Alannah MacTiernan (Minister for Regional Development)**.

WATER CORPORATION — RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS IN ARREARS*Question Without Notice 335 — Answer Advice*

HON ALANNAH MacTIERNAN (North Metropolitan — Minister for Regional Development) [5.05 pm]: I provide an answer to Hon Peter Collier's question without notice 335, asked on 10 May, and seek leave to have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The following material was incorporated —

I thank the Hon. Member for some notice of this question.

The total number of residential accounts in arrears or on payment plans is:

- (1) (a) 120 902
 (b) 105 960
 (c) 106 929
 (d) 100 864
 (e) 118 502

- (2) (a) \$62 544 102
- (b) \$57 582 896
- (c) \$59 437 113
- (d) \$58 759 467
- (e) \$63 808 023

WATER — SELF-SUPPLY LICENCES — BYPASS CONDITION

Question on Notice 1093 — Answer Advice

HON ALANNAH MacTIERNAN (North Metropolitan — Minister for Regional Development) [5.06 pm]: Pursuant to standing order 108(2), I inform the house that the answer to question on notice 1093, asked by Hon Rick Mazza on 29 March 2018 to me as the minister representing the Minister for Water, will be provided on 14 June 2018.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARINGS

Statement by President

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Kate Doust): Members, before we return to orders of the day, when we rise this afternoon, I just want you to take a moment to clear out your desks of any personal or work material prior to leaving Parliament, as this chamber will be occupied by members of the Legislative Assembly next week for their budget estimates hearings. Any items remaining on your desks will be cleared out tonight by staff and retained until the following week.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND INJURY MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2017

Committee

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting. The Chair of Committees (Hon Simon O'Brien) in the chair; Hon Alannah MacTiernan (Minister for Regional Development) in charge of the bill.

Clause 4: Section 5 amended —

Committee was interrupted after the clause had been partly considered.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: We are currently considering clause 4. I note that the explanatory memorandum indicates that clause 4(1) will delete current definitions used in the act relating to dependence and compensation entitlements following a workplace death. Clause 4(2) inserts a definition of “dependant” that has the meaning given in clause 3 of new schedule 1A. All relevant definitions and compensation entitlements relating to dependence are set out in new schedule 1A, which is clause 11 of the bill. I indicated earlier that I had an interest in understanding the rationale of the government in choosing to delete the definition of “de facto” and to instead, as I understand it, leave the act silent in terms of the definition, thereby requiring lawmakers and other interested citizens to refer to section 13A of the Interpretation Act 1984. Section 13A of the Interpretation Act reads as follows —

- (1) A reference in a written law to a de facto relationship shall be construed as a reference to a relationship (other than a legal marriage) between 2 persons who live together in a marriage-like relationship.
- (2) The following factors are indicators of whether or not a de facto relationship exists between 2 persons, but are not essential —
 - (a) the length of the relationship between them;
 - (b) whether the 2 persons have resided together;
 - (c) the nature and extent of common residence;
 - (d) whether there is, or has been, a sexual relationship between them;
 - (e) the degree of financial dependence or interdependence, and any arrangements for financial support, between them;
 - (f) the ownership, use and acquisition of their property (including property they own individually);
 - (g) the degree of mutual commitment by them to a shared life;
 - (h) whether they care for and support children;
 - (i) the reputation, and public aspects, of the relationship between them.
- (3) It does not matter whether —
 - (a) the persons are different sexes or the same sex; or
 - (b) either of the persons is legally married to someone else or in another de facto relationship.
- (4) A reference in a written law to a de facto partner shall be construed as a reference to a person who lives, or where the context requires, has lived, in a de facto relationship.

I draw to the minister's attention that the purpose of the distribution of the benefits here is not limited to a de facto partner. Indeed, it is intended that such distribution occurs to relatives. I ask the minister whether any consideration was given to incorporating or ensuring that the definitions in this bill are consistent with those in the Family Court Act 1997, not for the definition of "de facto", but for the definition of a relative.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: We are not familiar with the provisions of the Marriage Act. It is not relevant here because the definition of spouse will remain unchanged in the act. The de facto partner aspect is one that we are changing. I have already given an explanation about why we are changing that. I cannot add further to that. That has been the scheme and continues to be the scheme—the focus is on compensation for people who are dependants.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I was not asking about the definition of de facto. I specifically indicated that I was not asking about that. It was not the Marriage Act I was asking about. I was asking about the Family Court Act 1997.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: We do not know what the provisions are in the Family Court Act. This scheme has never referenced those. This scheme has always referred to "spouse" and "de facto partner".

Hon NICK GOIRAN: That is not quite correct, is it? The act that the government will amend by virtue of this bill at schedule 1A will not merely have a definition of "partner" and "child", but also what a "prescribed family member" is. I am interested to know whether any consideration was given by the government to ensure consistency between what a prescribed family member is, who would be entitled to receive some of this money in the event that a worker died, and the definition of a relative in the Family Court Act.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I advise that we did not reference that other act. It did not seem relevant.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Did any of the submitters raise this issue? Did any of the submitters, including the State Solicitor's Office, which did not provide a submission but from which the government sought regular advice, address the issue of whether the definition of "prescribed family member" should or should not be consistent with the definitions in the Family Court Act 1997?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: We cannot say categorically that no-one raised this issue. But, on balance, it was not considered to be an important issue and it did not seem to be a necessary point to make. Fundamentally, the bill is designed to look after people who are dependants. The bill makes some provision, in the situation in which there are no dependants, for prescribed family members. Other legislation dealing with this issue was not considered to be highly relevant.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: It certainly was not considered highly relevant, because it sounds as though nobody considered it. The bill provides the following definition of "prescribed family member" —

A person is a *prescribed family member* if —

- (a) the person is a parent of the worker; or
- (b) the person is a step-parent of the worker (whether the worker was legally adopted or not); or
- (c) the worker stands in the place of a parent to the person; or
- (d) the person stands in the place of a parent to the worker; or
- (e) the person is a sibling or half-sibling of the worker; or
- (f) the worker is a grandparent of the person; or
- (g) the person is a grandparent of the worker.

Immediately prior to that part of the bill, in proposed schedule 1A, clause 2(1) provides the following definition —

A person is a *partner* if —

- (a) the worker is the spouse or de facto partner of the person; or
- (b) the worker has previously been a spouse or de facto partner of the person.

Clause 2(2) provides the following definition —

A person, of any age, is a *child* if —

- (a) the worker is a parent of the person; or
- (b) the worker is a step-parent of the person (whether the person was legally adopted by the worker or not),

and *children* has a corresponding meaning.

Clause 4 of the bill, which is in part 2, headed "Amendments about compensation for dependants of workers", seeks to amend section 5 of the act. Clause 4(2) seeks to insert in section 5(1) the following definition —

dependant of a deceased worker has the meaning given in Schedule 1A clause 3;

In contrast with that, section 7 of the Family Court Act 1997—the current Western Australian act—provides the following definition —

For the purposes of section 6, a relative of a person is —

- (a) a father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, step-father or step-mother of the person; or
- (b) a son, daughter, grandson, grand-daughter, step-son or step-daughter of the person; or
- (c) a brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, step-brother or step-sister of the person; or
- (d) an uncle or aunt of the person; or
- (e) a nephew or niece of the person; or
- (f) a cousin of the person; or
- (g) if the person is or was married, in addition to paragraphs (a) to (f), a person who is or was a relative, of the kind described in any of those paragraphs, of the person's spouse; or
- (h) if the person is or was in a de facto relationship with another person, in addition to paragraphs (a) to (f), a person who would be a relative of a kind described in any of those paragraphs if the persons in that de facto relationship were or had been married to each other.

Was any consideration given to ensuring consistency between those respective definitions?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: No. The overwhelming principle was that these definitions are fundamentally already in the legislation. This is simply repeated here in a different way, because the bill amends the structure of the legislation. In fact, it represents no change in the classes of child or prescribed family member. This is simply trying to modernise the sums of money. It was necessary in the rewrite to repeat these definitions. But there are no changes to the existing arrangements.

Progress reported and leave granted to sit again, pursuant to standing orders.

TAXI PLATES — CAP REMOVAL

Statement

HON COLIN TINCKNELL (South West) [5.20 pm]: Tonight I want to make a member's statement regarding the taxi industry. I have had delivered to me a letter from concerned taxidriviers and owners who are currently feeling the full impact of the government drive to reform the on-demand transport industry. If I may, I would like to read this letter out to the house, but before I do, I would like to add that this letter is accompanied by almost 1 000 signatures from taxidriviers and owners who agree with the points raised in this letter. I would also like to bring to the attention of the house that a very large body of people, all of whom clearly feel let down by the government, are voicing their concerns about the budget consultation processes being undertaken in the reform of the transport industry and the measures that are being proposed. These hardworking men and women, who have for many years provided a valuable public service, have paid a heavy price, both financially and mentally, for working within the regulations of the taxi industry. I urge the government to carefully consider the hardships that the current compensation package will confer and further urge that the government honour an agreement given by Hon Rita Saffioti in November 2017 to retain the cap on taxi licences for a further four years. I note that in asking for such a concession, the primary driving force of all these signed letters in support of this position is that it simply would be reduced and even cover their debt. The letter states —

I have put this petition together for you in regard to concerns I have about a recent change made to an offer to taxi owners by The Minister for Transport, Hon Rita Saffioti.

It was announced on 17 March 2018 that the cap for the maximum number of taxi plates in use in Western Australia was to be removed. This is a significant move away from an original offer given by the Hon Rita Saffioti on 02 November 2017, in which it was stated that the cap would be kept in place for 4 years to allow the taxi industry to adjust to the change.

This announcement was a big shock to me, I have spoken to numerous people and through my research I have found that prior to this reversal, there has been next to no consultation with taxi owners, drivers or major taxi bodies. This change will impose considerable hardships on my taxi business and put untold pressure on me and hundreds of taxi operators like me.

As you will see from the below/attached signatures that there are many others who will also be adversely affected by this recent back flip. All of us are feeling the pressure of the current situation, in particular the knowledge that this will cause significant financial hardship and emotional distress. Western Australia is already experiencing a high level of mental health issues, some leading to such drastic measures as suicide. This recent decision will only contribute to the deteriorating mental health of another section of

the community through the stress of the financial uncertainty and unfairness of this situation. I believe that the government should be made aware of the impact this will have and should be ashamed of their decision.

There are many who agree with my concerns please find below/attached the signatures of many other concerned taxi operators.

Regards ...

Thank you.

INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA, BIPHOBIA, INTERSEXISM AND TRANSPHOBIA

Statement

HON ALISON XAMON (North Metropolitan) [5.25 pm]: I rise tonight to speak because it is the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia, otherwise known by the interesting name of IDAHOBIT. IDAHOBIT is a day when we celebrate the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer community; acknowledge and honour the hard-fought advancements in the human rights of LGBTIQ people; and recognise that there is still much more work to be done.

When we consider that Australians of diverse sexual orientation, sex or gender identity are estimated to account for up to 11 per cent of the Australian population and then add to this number family, friends and work colleagues, it is clear that IDAHOBIT day is a directly relevant and important day for us all, and we all have a role in ending discrimination. Last year, 2017, was a very big year. At the federal level, the Family Court ruled that trans young people can access the treatment they need without having to go through a court process and, of course, Australia finally passed marriage equality laws. At the state level, the government has introduced legislation to expunge historic homosexual convictions. The bill has passed through the other place and I am looking forward to making my second reading contribution in this place to give voice to my LGBTIQ constituents' experiences of living in a time when it was illegal to express their true selves and be public about the people whom they loved.

During my contribution, I will also pay tribute to deeply personal and often dangerous lifelong campaigns that older lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people have waged in order to achieve these gains. The postal survey on marriage equality was an incredibly damaging time for our LGBTIQ community as they had to withstand public debate about whether they should have access to the same human rights as the rest of us, along with a lot of irrelevant and hurtful arguments peddled by the No campaign. It is heartening that, as a whole, our society is becoming aware of the legacy of discriminatory legislation, but, unfortunately, that alone does not change the impact of a lifetime of stigma. The LGBTIQ community experiences a much higher rate of mental health issues than that of the rest of the community. There is no room for complacency, because discriminatory legislation and practices still exist and many in our community are simply not aware of these formalised inequities in our society.

In WA, our Equal Opportunity Act, for example, allows private religious schools to make employment or enrolment decisions based on the sexuality or gender history of teachers, students or their parents. There have been instances in WA of teachers being dismissed on the basis of their sexuality and children being asked to leave their school because their parents are gay. That is a disgrace. This also means that LGBTIQ young people who do not have a choice about their sexuality, or, in most instances, which school they attend, can legally be expelled. Recent polling suggests that 80 per cent of Australians do not agree with religious schools being able to do this. I am firmly part of that 80 per cent. True marriage equality has not yet been achieved, as forced divorce laws are still in place in most states, including here in Western Australia.

This is a situation in which only single people are able to apply for a gender recognition certificate, and we have been told that Western Australians will not see changes to this until later this year. There are also myriad other quite unnecessary hurdles that trans people face to have their gender identity officially recognised. I am working alongside trans members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer community on the best ways we can address these. A good start would be to abolish the Western Australian Gender Reassignment Board, which is unique to Western Australia and has well and truly had its day. We know also there is much work to be done for the intersex community. I specifically want to point out the problems for infants who are subject to what is known as corrective surgery at birth, even though the best advice is to wait until after the child is old enough to express their gender, as it is likely doctors may end up assigning the wrong gender. The outcome in those instances can be absolutely devastating for those involved. Our health services need to be guided by evidence-based protocols. These are just some examples of the issues facing the LGBTIQ community, and they demonstrate that we have a long way to go on a number of fronts. By no means have we got there simply because we finally have marriage equality.

Once again, it is great to at least have the annual occasion of International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia—IDAHOBIT—to recognise the LGBTIQ community and its resilience in the face of stigma and discrimination. It is an opportunity to reflect on how far we have come and make sure we are raising awareness of how much further we have to go.

House adjourned at 5.31 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT — LOCAL ROAD UPKEEP LEVY**1092. Hon Colin de Grussa to the minister representing the Minister for Transport:**

I refer to charges levied by local governments to heavy haulage companies or other road users for the maintenance of local roads, and I ask:

- (a) what specific section of the *Local Government Act 1995* confers power on local governments to levy road users for the upkeep of local roads;
- (b) how many local governments have agreements with companies or road users for the upkeep or payments for upkeep of local roads; and
- (c) will the Minister please provide a list of agreements made by local governments with other companies and industries for the upkeep of local roads.?

Hon Stephen Dawson replied:

- (a)–(c) Main Roads is currently in discussion with the Western Australian Local Government Association with regard to these matters. Once these discussions have concluded, an update can be provided.

WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANS AND WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL**1094. Hon Rick Mazza to the minister representing the Minister for Water:**

- (1) Why are none of the water resource management plans in Western Australia statutory plans?
- (2) Why hasn't the Minister appointed a Water Resources Council for the State under Part IIA of the *Water Agencies (Powers) Act 1984* to provide peak level advice to the Minister for Water?

Hon Alannah MacTiernan replied:

- (1) In Western Australia, the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914 requires that any statutory plans developed under that Act are considered by a Water Resources Council established under the *Water Agencies (Powers) Act 1984*. As the previous Government did not appoint a Water Resources Council, none of the water resources management plans in WA are statutory plans.
- (2) A Water Resources Council had not been established by the previous Government when I came to office as Minister for Water. I am currently considering the development of new water resources legislation which would modernise the requirements and approach to the development of statutory plans.

LAND CLEARING — KIMBERLEY**1097. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Environment:**

I refer to land clearing in the Kimberley, and I ask:

- (a) how many land clearing applications were made under Part V of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* between 2008 and the present;
- (b) for the answers in (a), will the Minister detail the applications by proponent, year, area in hectares, location, CPS number, purpose and whether the applications were granted (either wholly or in part), refused, withdrawn or still being assessed;
- (c) if no to (b), why not;
- (d) will the Minister also supply a map to accompany the details in (b);
- (e) if no to (d), why not;
- (f) how many applications that involved land clearing were referred to the West Australian Environmental Protection Authority under Part IV of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* between 2008 and the present;
- (g) for the answers in (f), will the Minister detail the referrals by proponent, year, area in hectares proposed for clearing, location, purpose and whether the projects were approved refused, withdrawn or still being assessed;
- (h) if no to (g), why not;
- (i) will the Minister also supply a map to accompany the details in (g);
- (j) if no to (i), why not;
- (k) will the Minister detail the area in hectares which have been cleared in successive years, collectively under State Agreement Acts from 2008 until present;
- (l) will the Minister also supply a map to accompany the details in (k); and
- (m) if no to (l), why not?

Hon Stephen Dawson replied:

- (a) 330 clearing permit applications have been made within the Kimberley Land Division between 1 January 2008 and 9 May 2018, including applications to amend a clearing permit made under Part V Division 2 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* and applications to clear native vegetation made in conjunction with a works approval or licence application under Part V, Division 3 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*;
- (b) [See tabled paper no 1386.]
- (c) Not applicable.
- (d) [See tabled paper no 1386.]
- (e) Not applicable.
- (f)–(g) Due to the substantive time and resource required to provide this information, I will table the response to this question for the Member at the sitting of the Legislative Council on 12 June 2018.
- (h) Not applicable.
- (i) Due to the substantive time and resource required to provide this information, I will table the response to this question for the Member at the sitting of the Legislative Council on 12 June 2018.
- (j) Not applicable.
- (k) There is no consolidated dataset containing information on areas cleared lawfully, in accordance with a statutory approval or exemption, or unlawfully under State Agreement Acts. Questions relating to data held by the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation in relation to individual State Agreement Acts should be referred to the Minister for State Development.
- (l) Not applicable.
- (m) Not applicable.

ALCOA — BAUXITE MINING OPERATIONS

1098. Hon Robin Chapple to the minister representing the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade:

With respect to Alcoa in Australia, its subsidiaries and associated companies, and their bauxite mining operations in Western Australia, I ask:

- (a) how many tenements are held by each company by type, number and hectare size;
- (b) how many hectares have been mined in each of the last five years;
- (c) how many hectares will be mined each year when the company expands to its full approved rate of production;
- (d) what is the total area mined to date;
- (e) how much of the total area mined required the clearing of native forest;
- (f) how many hectares have been rehabilitated to date;
- (g) how much of this area has been rehabilitated with jarrah forest species;
- (h) what is the current annual production of:
 - (i) bauxite; and
 - (ii) alumina;
- (i) when the company expands to its full approved rate of production, what will be the annual production of:
 - (i) bauxite; and
 - (ii) alumina;
- (j) how many hectares are currently used as Residue Disposal Areas;
- (k) what is the total area of closed Residue Disposal Areas;
- (l) what area of new Residue Disposal Areas will be required when the company expands to its full approved rate of production;
- (m) how much residue has been produced in each of the last five years;
- (n) what is the total amount of residue produced to date;
- (o) how much residue will be produced each year when the company expands to its full approved rate of production;

- (p) when do the company's mining leases expire;
- (q) when does the company anticipate completion of its approved expansion;
- (r) when did Alcoa begin exporting bauxite;
- (s) how much bauxite has been exported to date;
- (t) how many hectares are mined each year for bauxite for export;
- (u) how many hectares have been mined to date for bauxite for export;
- (v) will the Minister please table a map showing the mining leases, the area mined to date, and the area rehabilitated to date; and
- (w) if no to (v), why not?

Hon Alannah MacTiernan replied:

The Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation advises:

- (a) Tenements held by Alcoa of Australia Limited (Alcoa) are listed below. 1 State Agreement Act tenement;
 - 9 General Purpose Leases;
 - 1 Miscellaneous Licence;
 - 4 pending Exploration Licences; and
 - 15 Mining Leases.

Further tenement details outlined [See tabled paper no 1387.]

- (b)

Clearing (ha)		
Year	Huntly Mine	Willowdale Mine
2013	674	211
2014	633	195
2015	571	184
2016	470	160
2017	497	178

- (c)

Approved Mining and Management Program predicted clearing rates (ha):					
Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Planned Clearing – Huntly	491	487	486	475	478
Planned Clearing – Willowdale	317	166	169	213	215

- (d)

Total Clearing up to December 2017 (ha)	
Jarrahdale	4,090
Huntly	15,189
Willowdale	5,551
Total:	24,830

- (e) 100%.

- (f)

Total Rehabilitation up to December 2017 (ha):	
Jarrahdale	4,088
Huntly	11,028
Willowdale	4,204
Total:	19,320

- (g) 15,358 ha have been rehabilitated using jarrah forest species. The remaining 3,962 ha consist predominantly of Eucalyptus species native to the eastern states of Australia and some areas of pine. These introduced species were selected for their resistance to Phytophthora.

Rehabilitation Post 1988 (ha):	
Jarrahdale	2,254
Huntly	9,073
Willowdale	4,031
Total:	15,358

- (h) (i)–(ii) Bauxite 33.2 Mt (dry) and alumina approximately 9 Mt.
- (i) (i)–(ii) Alcoa has a five-year ‘rolling’ mine plan that is reviewed annually by the Mine Management Program Liaison Group in accordance with Ministerial Statement 728.

2017 – 2021 Approved MMP (Mt dry)	
2017	32.66
2018	32.384
2019	32.936
2020	31.924
2021	33.58

Alumina production limits are prescribed through Ministerial Statements and are subject to relevant Part V licensing limits under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*.

- (j) 1,500 ha.
- (k) 300 ha.
- (l) With the introduction of residue filtration, Alcoa can now stack within the existing footprint for a number of years without the need for expanding, even if production was increased to approved limits.
- Alcoa has Long-Term Residue Management Strategies (LTRMS) for each refinery which are updated every five years. These are designed to inform both government and community about long-term planning and management strategies including the location of future residue drying areas; current plans for closure and future land use options; and current research into residue management and reuse.

- (m)

Residue Production (Mt)					
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Kwinana	4.52	4.70	4.55	4.62	4.37
Pinjarra	8.30	8.53	8.60	8.71	8.65
Wagerup	5.14	5.10	5.07	5.24	5.21

- (n)

Total residue produced by refinery to the end of 2017 (Mt)	
Kwinana	175.5
Pinjarra	263.6
Wagerup	123.7

- (o)

Projected Residue Production if Alcoa expanded to approved production limits		
	Production (Mtpa Al ₂ O ₃)	Residue (Mtpa)
Kwinana	2.2	4.6
Pinjarra	5.0	9.5
Wagerup	4.7	8.9

- (p) ML 1SA currently expires in 2045 but provision exists in the Alumina Refinery Agreement Act 1961 for Alcoa to apply for a further mineral lease. This information is publicly available at AustLii Western Australian Current Acts at:

http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/wa/consol_act/araa1961256/

- (q) The Wagerup Unit Three expansion remains under suspension.

- (r) 2016.

- (s)

Bauxite Exports (Kt, wet)	
2016	87
2017	890
2018 (YTD March)	238

- (t) Approximately 36 ha to date. Bauxite mined for export is included as part of Alcoa's approved mining program.
- (u) Approximately 17 ha to date. Bauxite mined for export is included as part of Alcoa's approved mining program.
- (v) See map [See tabled paper no 1387.]
- (w) Not applicable.

MINISTER FOR ROAD SAFETY — MOORA VISITS

1162. Hon Martin Aldridge to the minister representing the Minister for Road Safety:

I refer to Moora in the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia, and I ask:

- (a) has the Minister travelled to Moora on official business at any time since 11 March 2017;
- (b) if yes to (a), what was the purpose of the travel; and
- (c) does the Minister have any plans to visit Moora in the next 12 months?

Hon Stephen Dawson replied:

As at 12 April 2018, I have travelled to a range of regional and remote communities including Albany, Bunbury, Beagle Bay, Broome, Collie, Kalgoorlie, Katanning, Newman, Port Hedland, Wagin and Williams.

MINISTER ASSISTING THE MINISTER FOR STATE DEVELOPMENT, JOBS AND TRADE — MOORA VISITS

1171. Hon Martin Aldridge to the minister assisting the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade:

I refer to Moora in the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia, and I ask:

- (a) has the Minister travelled to Moora on official business at any time since 11 March 2017;
- (b) if yes to (a), what was the purpose of the travel; and
- (c) does the Minister have any plans to visit Moora in the next 12 months?

Hon Alannah MacTiernan replied:

Please refer to answer to question on notice 1173.

MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE AND FOOD — MOORA VISITS

1172. Hon Martin Aldridge to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

I refer to Moora in the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia, and I ask:

- (a) has the Minister travelled to Moora on official business at any time since 11 March 2017;
- (b) if yes to (a), what was the purpose of the travel; and
- (c) does the Minister have any plans to visit Moora in the next 12 months?

Hon Alannah MacTiernan replied:

Please refer to answer to question on notice 1173.

MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT — MOORA VISITS

1173. Hon Martin Aldridge to the Minister for Regional Development:

I refer to Moora in the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia, and I ask:

- (a) has the Minister travelled to Moora on official business at any time since 11 March 2017;
- (b) if yes to (a), what was the purpose of the travel; and
- (c) does the Minister have any plans to visit Moora in the next 12 months?

Hon Alannah MacTiernan replied:

- (a) Yes.
- (b) Opening of Watheroo Doppler site, meeting with Shire of Moora and meeting with Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development staff.
- (c) Yes.

MINISTER FOR DISABILITY SERVICES — MOORA VISITS

1174. Hon Martin Aldridge to the Minister for Disability Services:

I refer to Moora in the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia, and I ask:

- (a) has the Minister travelled to Moora on official business at any time since 11 March 2017;
- (b) if yes to (a), what was the purpose of the travel; and
- (c) does the Minister have any plans to visit Moora in the next 12 months?

Hon Stephen Dawson replied:

- (a) No.
- (b) Not applicable.
- (c) No.

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT — MOORA VISITS

1175. Hon Martin Aldridge to the Minister for Environment:

I refer to Moora in the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia, and I ask:

- (a) has the Minister travelled to Moora on official business at any time since 11 March 2017;
- (b) if yes to (a), what was the purpose of the travel; and
- (c) does the Minister have any plans to visit Moora in the next 12 months?

Hon Stephen Dawson replied:

Please refer to Legislative Council Question on Notice 1174.
