

EDUCATION SECTOR

Motion

HON MARTIN PRITCHARD (North Metropolitan) [11.25 am] — without notice: I move —

That this house acknowledges the McGowan government's significant investment in the Western Australian education sector that is assisting in advancing student outcomes and career opportunities.

Members will know that I do not often move self-congratulatory motions in this place, but I felt compelled to move this motion because of all the challenges that the education department and schools have faced over the last few years. I have absolutely genuine respect and admiration for the two ministers who have had that portfolio; indeed, there have been more than that, but I will talk about the two ministers in the McGowan government. Minister Ellery held that portfolio for a number of years. In all my life, I have never had more respect for a very strong woman in a very tough role. She not only shows leadership and strength, but also can be convinced to change her mind, and she does that regularly if she is wrong, which I think is extremely good.

Hon Dan Caddy: Which doesn't happen often.

Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD: It does not happen too often. I am also very excited that a close friend of mine, Minister Buti, has taken on that role. I know about his commitment to education, so I am looking forward to many more years of his guidance in that area. That is the reason I moved this motion. There are so many things to talk about in education. There are also hitches and hiccups from time to time, but I say that the McGowan government deals with them. As I said, the ministers often change their mind if they are required to.

Before I get to the substance of my motion—I will probably run out of time, as I always do in these debates—I would like to thank all the frontline staff. I hate listing them, but I will endeavour to do so. They have assisted schools to operate over a very, very difficult period. There are the principals and teachers, admin staff, education assistants, gardeners, cleaners and all the support staff that make a school work. The reason I like to list them is that it gives me the opportunity to mention an absolute hero of mine—my youngest daughter, who is an education assistant. She is an interpreter for the deaf at Shenton College Deaf Education Centre. Dani, a shout-out for you. You are an absolute hero. I would also like to thank the many parents who kept schools going during that time, including those who volunteered to go on P&Cs, on the boards of independent schools and who volunteered to do all the little projects and jobs in the schools that make a good school work well. As I said, if I have missed out people, my apologies. There are people over in “Silver City” and many people who make the education system work for our kids. It has been a very trying time. As I said, I hope this motion gets the support of the whole house based on the fact that we should be supporting people on the front line. Obviously, it has been difficult over the last three years because of the outbreak of COVID. Many schools had long periods of shutdown. Individual children sometimes caught COVID on multiple occasions so they had to isolate. Families had to deal with that. For most families, as children get older, they can afford the time and opportunity to have a second income into the household and the second parent often goes out to work. There was then that disruption during COVID when schools were closed. That was all necessary. I think the Premier and the minister in particular made some good calls that kept us safe during that period. COVID has not finished; it has not gone away. However, I think we managed to flatten the curve to get through the worst of it. I want to acknowledge that it was difficult for families; hopefully, we are back into a little bit of normality, but we should remember that COVID has not disappeared.

I want to focus on some of the programs that have been introduced. Going to the substance of my motion, the McGowan government's previous minister introduced the career practitioners program, but it is very much supported by the current minister. The career practitioners program has been introduced into many secondary schools. It is designed for career practitioners to liaise with the school leadership team, students, staff, parents, training providers, employers and industry to make sure that students have the opportunity to participate in a broad range of work experience and study options. I think this is a magnificent move. I often go back to personal experience. I think I have mentioned in this house before that I left school halfway through year 10 because I did not like school. Back then, you could leave halfway through year 10 if you had an apprenticeship. I had no aptitude for working with wood or metal—I have never been very handy—but I applied and got an apprenticeship as a timber machinist. In my experience, it was one of the most boring and horrible jobs that could be, to be honest, but I was glad to get out of school. Ever since I started high school, I had had no plan for what I wanted to do, what I wanted to be or what electives I would take to head me in a particular direction. I wandered through high school, taking such diverse electives as home economics, timber and Italian that gave me no direction whatsoever. To be perfectly honest, I was probably not very interested either. Career practitioners are qualified teachers, and they will complete a certificate in career development. I think this is a very positive move to try to direct students so that they know what they want to do. Most students do not. I think this is a very good program and I commend the previous minister for

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introducing it. I know how much Minister Buti supports the program. Hopefully, it will be spread more broadly so that it can impact upon more and more students.

Another positive move of the McGowan government is the embedding of consent education and promotion of healthy relationship training in the Western Australian school curriculum. Many schools already had something along those lines because the need had been seen. Embedding it into the curriculum means that all students in public schools will get this sort of training. I am a father of three girls and grandfather of four granddaughters. I am going to refer to an article in *The West Australian*. I do not particularly want to; it is anathema to me. The article from Monday talks about a man by the name of Jeremy John Rowe. He is 47 years old. A couple of years ago, he plied a 13-year-old girl with alcohol and drugs before molesting her. The worst part about it is that he claimed she had been flirting with him in the hours before the sexual assault. He was 45 years old at the time. A 45-year-old man took advantage of a 13-year-old girl, but suggested that she had been flirting with him. I could go through the details but I will let members read it themselves. It is very distressing, to be perfectly honest. The point I want to make, which is probably more relevant to this, is that he believed she was flirting with him—a 13-year-old girl—and he thought that justified plying her with alcohol and drugs and molesting her when she was incapacitated. The article says that she told him she wanted to go home and said no to sex, but, in the end, she was incapacitated and could not resist, and was molested. I do not think she was raped, which was good, but she was molested. Training will now occur from preschool age; it will be relevant to the age and maturity of the children. My eldest grandchild, Sophie, is five years old. She goes to preschool. She will be having some sort of training in this area. I will run out of time before I say anywhere near as much as I wanted to on this subject. I often listen to Teeny Tiny Stevies because they have a lot of age-appropriate stuff for young kids, including the song *Boss of My Own Body*.

Hon Stephen Pratt: “I’m the boss of my own body.”

Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD: I think Hon Stephen Pratt is going to sing it. The training is age-appropriate and, of course, gets more complex as children get into higher levels of education. It is needed. I wrote down something, which I thought was very good, but I cannot take credit for thinking it up. It is that it should be remembered that not all disrespect leads to violence but violence starts with disrespect. I think this sort of training for our young children, as they grow into adulthood, is very important. They need to be able to say no when they are faced with these sorts of issues.

The last issue I am going to have time to talk about—there is so much more I wanted to talk about—is the introduction of the vaping toolkit. I was very distressed in the last Parliament when a member in this house suggested, and I may be paraphrasing, that it is a person’s right to be able to vape and it should be made legal. I was distressed. At the time, I spoke about how hard it was for me to give up smoking and about the effects of smoking. I am not going to be a wouser and suggest that everyone needs to stop smoking, but I encourage people to do so. We cannot allow vaping to entrench itself, particularly with our students. I am very proud of the McGowan government for tackling the issue and putting together an education toolkit that will hopefully convince our students to not take up this crazy habit. It took many years for us to get on the front foot with smoking and to educate people about the devastating effects of smoking. We have an opportunity to nip this particular habit in the bud before it becomes prevalent. I think the McGowan government’s health ministers have played their part in trying to make sure that it does not become entrenched, because we will know those effects only down the road. Unfortunately, nobody really knows what is contained in the liquid that is used in vapes and what harm it will do in the future. Like some things, vaping may have some benefit for heavy smokers. I do not know whether it is a better option, but it certainly has no place in schools today.

As I said, I never get through all the issues that I want to in my contributions during this time. Maybe a member’s statement might come on.

HON KLARA ANDRIC (South Metropolitan) [11.41 am]: I begin by thanking Hon Martin Pritchard for bringing this motion before the house today. It is a very important motion. I want to follow on from the honourable member’s remarks about the leadership—actually, I am going to call it the “captainship”—of our previous Minister for Education and Training and the great work that she did in this portfolio.

Hon Sue Ellery: That is very kind, but for everybody else, please, it is not necessary.

Hon KLARA ANDRIC: I had to say that I am a fan, but I will continue to speak a little bit on today’s motion.

I am sure that all members of this chamber will agree that education is one of the four pillars of a functioning and prosperous society. Education is what drives innovation in industry, and industry drives our economy. It is why we need to make sure that our kids have access to a quality education. It is also why the McGowan government has built or planned 40 new schools across Perth since 2017. I have some facts about the investment in education we have seen in the South Metropolitan Region. The major infrastructure spend in south metropolitan schools is currently sitting at just over half a billion dollars. In our second term, science labs have been completed at

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51 primary schools and are in progress at 22 schools, with a commitment to build 130 new science labs. In the South Metropolitan Region, there has been a total of 97 small commitments, and 53 of them have been completed, with the total spend on small commitments in the South Metropolitan Region sitting at just under \$5 million.

Although there are multiple facets of education, I would like to use my time today to focus on a very important area of education and one that has seen leadership from the McGowan Labor government since coming to office—that is, STEM. STEM is an umbrella term that stands for science, technology, engineering and mathematics. These four areas are vital to our ever-evolving jobs industry of the future. It is estimated that 65 per cent of children starting primary school will work in roles that do not yet exist, 75 per cent of the fastest growing occupations require STEM skills and workers will spend 77 per cent more time using science and mathematical skills by 2030. Members can see why Western Australian students need STEM skills to be equipped for their working lives when they graduate. This is exactly why the McGowan government has invested, and is continuing to invest, heavily in STEM education and learning opportunities.

The first term of the McGowan government saw 200 public primary school classrooms transformed into science labs. We are investing in science, technology and engineering in local schools to give students the skills they need to take on those jobs in the future. The upgrade program has been implemented across 67 secondary schools and is delivering new and upgraded STEM facilities. The McGowan government has committed \$87.6 million to improve and build new STEM labs in public secondary schools over the next three years. This is in addition to delivering modern STEM labs as part of several larger school infrastructure projects across our state. Also, each school that received a new lab was granted \$25 000 to purchase science equipment, including digital microscopes, models for human anatomy and astrology, 3D printers, virtual reality headsets, robotics and renewable energy kits. This science revamping has continued into the McGowan government's second term, with further funding for more than 130 primary school and district high school classrooms to be upgraded into science labs.

With this investment in STEM education, something that I know will change—in fact, to be honest, it must change—is the longstanding cultural issue that has needed to be addressed. This issue is the lack of women in STEM roles, and that is why we as a government must invest, and are investing, in STEM education from a young age. I will quote some statistics made available by the Department of Education. Seventy-five per cent of all new jobs require skills in STEM, but only 27 per cent of people with STEM qualifications are female. Female graduates in STEM fields make up only 13 per cent of our ICT workforce, 14 per cent of our engineering workforce, 22 per cent of the physics workforce and 35 per cent of the mathematics workforce. The lack of women in STEM roles can be traced back to the early years of education. Research shows that during the years that young girls reach approximately years 5 and 6, their perception of STEM begins to change, suggesting that they begin to lose their confidence and start believing in this misconception that STEM is an area for boys only. STEM being known as an area for men only could not be further from the truth. We need look only at the history of some of the incredible women in science that can attest to this.

I have a list of a few incredible women and, looking at the time, I will probably not get through all of them. One of the women I would like to mention is WA's very own Fiona Wood, a plastic surgeon who has pioneered work on burn care, such as the development of spray-on skin. The contributions that women are making, and have made, to STEM is too significant not to increase their participation in the STEM workforce right here in WA. I am pleased to see public schools across Western Australia and the McGowan government addressing this very issue. Given the previously mentioned upgrades to STEM made by the McGowan government, STEM will now be more accessible for young women and girls than ever before.

Last Monday, I had the pleasure of attending the women in business breakfast with Hon Kim Giddens. I met several talented, accomplished women. One woman that I would like to briefly mention today is Dr Parwinder Kaur, an award-winning scientist and community leader who recently joined the Western Australian Women's Hall of Fame. Dr Parwinder is an associate professor in biotechnology at UWA and director of DNA Zoo Australia. She grew up in a farming village in Punjab, northern India, where she faced many challenges. She said that if it were not for a scholarship in science, she would not be where she is today. She was accepted in the Women's Hall of Fame for substantial contributions to her field of biotechnology. She is a truly incredible woman who does amazing things in her field.

In closing, I would like to express the hope that I see the gender gap in STEM being closed in coming years and young girls taking steps to choose career pathways in this very important field. My hope for that is reinforced by the McGowan government's investment into STEM in schools and seeing our public schools empower young women to put their brilliant minds to work.

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [11.51 am]: I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this debate. I thank Hon Martin Pritchard for bringing it forward. One of the enormous privileges of my political life was to serve as the Minister for Education and Training. This debate gives me the opportunity to talk about that a little and thank some people who played a key role in that. I will start by acknowledging the fantastic

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work that occurs every single day in schools across Western Australia by the teachers, education assistants, cleaners, laboratory assistants, managers of corporate services, parents and citizens associations, parents and friends associations, members of the school boards and all their respective associations and organisations. I thank them for what they do to make sure that education continues every single day. I also want to acknowledge all those officers in the Department of Education and place on the record my appreciation for the work of the director general, Lisa Rodgers, and her fantastic team, not just for the support they provided me when I was the minister, but also for the work they do every day supporting schools across WA.

For those who aspire to be ministers, I highly recommend they consider immersing themselves in education and training policies so they might aspire to be the minister for those things. I do not recommend that they become ministers during a pandemic because it was an extraordinary time. We were literally building the plane as we were flying the plane. We were trying to ensure that schools remained safe and open and that education could continue, with a workforce that was also worried about its own families, its own safety and its own health. It was an extraordinary time. One of the flow-on consequences of the pandemic is that after giving up drinking coffee about 30 years ago, I took it up again during the pandemic, so I am now back to drinking coffee, which I managed to avoid for a very long time.

I particularly want to acknowledge all those who worked so hard during the pandemic. We had to put in place extensive policies and procedures that obviously included meeting the requirements set out by the Chief Health Officer and his team. I want to thank everybody. During the pandemic, an incident management team—I cannot remember the name—was set up within the Department of Education, which comprised people from across the sector. Catholic Education Western Australia had people on that team, as did the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia. They all worked together to make sure that we put in place policies and procedures that worked.

The work that goes on in schools is not just carried out by those employed by the respective education authorities. A range of primarily not-for-profit and other organisations provide support for schools to deliver all sorts of programs, starting with the most basic, which is literacy and numeracy. I had the fantastic privilege of being able to support some of those organisations, which I also want to acknowledge, including the Fogarty Foundation. Annie and Brett Fogarty set up the Fogarty Foundation. It does really amazing work in literacy and numeracy in schools in disadvantaged areas. It provides not only evidence-based programs for lifting the literacy and numeracy rates of students, but also leadership in those schools, making those schools really effective places of learning. I want to thank all those organisations who support the work that is done in public education in particular.

I also want to acknowledge my decision to go to the Premier and ask him to consider giving me an alternative portfolio. I genuinely believe that the education and training portfolio has one of the largest budgets in the state, with a budget of around \$5 billion. I genuinely believe that education is so critical to our economy and to the everyday lives of ordinary Western Australians that we needed to have a minister who was going to take the policies forward to the next election and beyond. That was not going to be me because this is my last term. I really thought it was important succession planning to ensure that a new minister be appointed. I had my fingers crossed for my friend Tony Buti. I was texting him. I hoped it would be him. I was really pleased when he got the portfolio. I know that he is going to do a fantastic job. He brings to it a different experience from mine and different nuanced priorities. That is as it should be. I said to him, “If I am able to assist you in any way, I will, but this is your portfolio. You have to make it yours. You have to run with the priorities that are important to you.” I will support him in doing that.

I want to touch on some of the important things that are going on. One of the issues that we wanted to tackle was ensuring that when students choose the subjects they will study in years 11 and 12, they are able to do so in a much better, informed way. The career taster program gives year 9 students an opportunity to literally taste a range of vocational subjects. With no disrespect to baristas, because I am now drinking coffee again, and with no disrespect to the other majority vocational courses that students were undertaking, students were not always making decisions based on having all the information in front of them. More importantly, their parents probably did not have all the information in front of them. Giving year 9 students an opportunity to try a variety of vocational subjects to give them a sense of the range of options available to them when they make their subject choices in year 10 was an important policy that we also put in place.

I want to touch on some of the things that I think are important to recognise about our public schools. The event that literally marks the end of our working year every year, as former Minister for Education Peter Collier would remember, is the announcement of the Beazley Medal award winners. We knew that when we got to that event at Government House or wherever it was being held, our working year was coming to an end, because it is usually held in the last week before Christmas. I was delighted to see that in December 2022, the Beazley Medal awards for excellence went to two public schools—Perth Modern School, which is a frequent winner of those awards, and Harrisdale Senior High School. It was fantastic to see.

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I want to give one more shout-out. Another thing that we have done is rapidly expand the number of Indigenous languages that are being taught in our public schools. I want to acknowledge a great school, Beachlands Primary School in Geraldton, which also won an award for its work in ensuring that its students learn the local Indigenous language so that it will remain alive. Indigenous languages are now being taught in public primary schools right across Western Australia. It is fabulous to see the pride that the young Indigenous kids take in teaching the other kids in their classroom about their culture and language. From my time as Minister for Education and Training, that is one of the things of which I am most proud, and I know that Tony Buti will continue to make his mark on this portfolio as well.

I want to end by thanking all the people who work in the education system. It has been a privilege to work with them.

HON DONNA FARAGHER (East Metropolitan) [12 noon]: I rise to say a few words on the motion before us. I preface my comments by saying that I tend to take a bipartisan view on education. I think our former Minister for Education and Training would agree with that statement. I firmly believe that children must be given the best possible start in life. It is important that regardless of whether we are in government or in opposition, we recognise the good things that are happening, and that we also provide support when we are facing challenging times, such as occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I will say, however, that when a motion such as this is presented, it is also incumbent upon the opposition to highlight some matters that need to continue to be addressed. On face value, we could take it that the education sector is all rosy, but that is not the case. I must admit that I find it a little intriguing that this motion has been brought before the house in the same week that we have had a story on the front page of *The West Australian* about how Highgate Primary School is literally bursting at the seams. It does not have enough toilets, music lessons and one-on-one learning support sessions have to be held in hallways, and lunchtimes have to be staggered, which is at times in conflict with sports classes that are being held in the undercover area, causing massive disruption to students and staff.

Notwithstanding that, I agree with the other speakers so far that some very good things are happening in our education system. Like Hon Martin Pritchard and the minister, I too want to acknowledge the incredible role that school leaders and teachers, and all school staff, are playing in supporting our students each and every day. I also acknowledge the significant challenges that they have faced over the past few years in responding to COVID-19. They absolutely deserve every bit of thanks and gratitude from us and from the entire community. Even today, teachers are supporting thousands of students right across this state who are currently sitting their National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy test. Notwithstanding that, there are issues within the education system that need to be addressed. Those issues include teacher shortages; the health and wellbeing concerns of school leaders, teachers and staff, and, indeed, students; the lack of appropriate planning for new schools; and the number of instances of physical assault and threatening behaviour against school staff, which we all agree is completely unacceptable.

I notice that the new Minister for Education has had quite a bit to say about the decline in the number of students undertaking Australian tertiary admission rank courses and has raised some significant concerns. I refer to an article in *The West Australian* earlier this month by Dr Lynette Vernon, vice chancellor's research fellow at Edith Cowan University's school of education. She states —

Over time WA's ATAR population has declined: In 2016 we had 13,540 students doing ATAR, yet in 2022 the cohort comprised just 9643 students, an almost 20 per cent drop. WA's participation rate also dropped to 31 per cent, whereas most other Australian States are above 50 per cent.

I agree with Minister Buti that raising these concerns does not take away from the fact that students must always be given choice. Vocational education and training qualifications are equally as valuable and important as the qualifications of students who decide to take the ATAR pathway. I refer to another article in *The West Australian* that is dated 13 January, in which Minister Buti states —

But there is an increasing number of students entering university through alternative entry options, including enabling programs.

I worry we may be developing a culture in which seeking the easiest possible pathway into university is outweighing the importance of engaging with challenging content, developing writing skills for essay-style assignments and acquiring experience in the rigours of studying for exams.

He goes on to say —

With universities creating and promoting alternative entry pathways, we are embarking on a bold experiment, which may deliver new opportunities and benefits to some students.

However, others who choose to enter university through these less challenging routes may find themselves in a very demanding tertiary environment without the study skill to succeed.

While I am a strong advocate for creating opportunities for people to enter university, it's not in anyone's interest that we have more students starting university only to not achieve their chosen qualification and then be burdened with a HECS debt.

We need to investigate what the results show to better understand how our young university students are faring and whether these concerns are well-founded.

In raising this, I know that there has been some criticism, I think even from the Premier, about decisions that have been made by universities, and about the impact of the publication of ATAR league tables. If the minister does intend to investigate this, I ask that he also assesses the impact of the reforms that were put in place by the former Minister for Education and Training in 2019, that being the ability for students to select a third pathway of five general courses in order to complete their Western Australian Certificate of Education. I remember that at the time of that announcement in 2019, I raised the concern, and I know that others raised similar concerns, that that decision by Minister Ellery had the potential that a number of students would choose to take the easier option. That is exactly what the new Minister for Education is now talking about. We know from answers provided to me by the government last month that last year, over 2 700 students took the third pathway option. I would like the new minister, in any assessment or investigation of this issue, to examine the impact of the former minister's decision. I think that would be fair and reasonable.

In the short time left to me, I would be remiss if I did not mention a couple of my favourite topics in the context of early childhood education. I implore the government once again to make some announcements about the delivery of more child and parent centres across the state. Those centres fall within the responsibility of the Department of Education. Despite repeated calls from the community services sector and educators, and, indeed, from me, the government has shown absolutely no interest in increasing the number of child and parent centres across the state. This is despite the fact that numerous reports have found that it is a highly successful model of integrated service provision—or a one-stop-shop if we want to call it that—that is delivering hundreds upon hundreds of programs and services each and every year to thousands upon thousands of young children and their families, often in areas of high vulnerability and disadvantage. It is also despite the fact that an independent evaluation of this initiative has found that these centres are incredibly valuable in supporting early childhood development and assisting in identifying potential developmental delays and concerns with children.

While I am on the issue of early intervention, and given that I will take any opportunity to raise this matter in the house, I want to take this opportunity to ask the government most sincerely to introduce direct face-to-face speech pathology services in government schools. Members, we now have children waiting over 12 months to see a speech pathologist in metropolitan Perth. Kindy kids will wait until they are in pre-primary to get that support. That is not good enough! So, again, I ask the government, at the very least, to trial the service. It is not a panacea for everything in child development, but it is something that is strongly supported. I simply ask the government to trial it. The government will get my full support. Go to where the children are. It is not good enough that children are waiting over a year to access these services. Help them when they need it most.

HON LORNA HARPER (East Metropolitan) [12.10 pm]: I, too, rise today to support Hon Martin Pritchard's motion on the McGowan government's investment in schools and assistance in advancing student outcomes and career opportunities. As many in the chamber are fully aware, I am a great supporter of education—early childhood education and education in general. I worked as an education assistant in some schools.

One thing about living in Western Australia, and in Perth in particular, is that we know about our expanding suburbs. I live in one of them, Ellenbrook. We are growing faster out there than anyone can believe. We have new suburbs in Brabham and Dayton, and Caversham has expanded. The McGowan government has invested by making sure that we have more schools available out there, and we have more to come.

I was going to talk about that, but I listened this morning. I love the Thursday morning sessions, when I listen to everybody and learn the different lenses they put on a motion, what we each take from it and how we think about it. I took it this way. We teach our children from an early age, and what we teach them shapes them into who they will become as adults. When I was at school, rather a long time ago, the focus was on academics—reading, writing, maths, languages, history et cetera. Of course, Hon Martin Pritchard also mentioned home economics. I can cook up a storm, but I prefer woodwork to sewing; it is not my thing. Today, we have a more holistic approach. Although academic learning is extremely important, we cannot forget about the emotional, psychological and social development of our children. Saying that, the McGowan government has delivered \$104 million in support for student mental health and wellbeing, \$42.2 million for an additional 100 FTE school psychologists for four years until 2025, and \$38.5 million to expand the successful alternative learning settings program across WA.

These supports are wonderful, but the program that really jumps out at me is the Western Australian Respectful Relationships teaching support program. This is going into primary and public schools across Western Australia. I come from an early childhood background, and we taught our young children some of this stuff. We did not quite call it “protective behaviours”, but we taught how there is a private time and a public time, and certain behaviours are about being respectful and nice. We did it in a way and with language that was suitable to the age group.

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As Hon Martin Pritchard mentioned earlier—it is worth reinforcing again and again—although not all disrespect leads to violence, all violence starts with disrespect. Whether the disrespect is to women, people of a different cultural or religious background or sexual orientation, or anyone else, it is still disrespectful. Teaching young people about healthy and positive relationships is the best way to break the cycle and prevent violence before it starts. The McGowan government has delivered and is expanding this teaching program to provide schools with resources to improve understanding of family and domestic violence.

One of the things that I feel we, as adults, should be looking at is ourselves and our colleagues, and how we treat each other with respect. It starts with us. We are the role models. We are lucky to be standing here in the Western Australian Parliament, which means what we do and say should reflect our society. As adults, we need to be more aware of the excuses we make and recognise how our behaviour and attitudes can make disrespect to women and girls, in particular, seem normal. Disrespect includes things like speaking over the top of someone; explaining what the person has said to others; putting pressure on someone to do something that they are not comfortable with; using power to control, abuse or bully someone; treating someone as though they are not as important; treating someone differently because they are different in any way; and dismissing what someone believes or feels about something.

Growing up as a young woman, I heard lots of things said. All women in this chamber will also have heard this. As a young woman, I was told things like “lighten up” when a boy was mean to us: “He did not mean it like that.” “It is only a bit of fun.” “It’s just a joke.” Well, it is not a bit of fun, it is not a joke, and we should not have to lighten up. We should be teaching our young men how to be respectful. We should not have to teach our young women how to deal with it. We are teaching the men to be more respectful.

We cannot accept aggression as just being part of being a boy. Yes, boys and girls are different; we know that. Having worked in early childhood, I will tell members that boys, in general, but not always, have more energy. They like to construct and deconstruct things. They are less interested in the creative than the destructive part, but they enjoy making it and then destroying it. That was a part of a lot of their make-up. They were loud, they were boisterous, and they did lots of stuff—but as a young girl, so was I, as were many other girls. I am not the most artistic or creative person, but I can build and knock down anything. I would jump off anything. If someone dared me, I would climb a tree, and lots of young women are like that. As a girl, I was told that that is not what I should be doing; I was told that I was playing like a boy. Girls cannot play soccer, or football; that is a boys’ game. Well, you know what? We played hockey against the boys at school. They were terrified. We said, “Well, it is a girls’ game. Why are you so scared?” Even that is not the language we need to be using today.

Another thing that also happens is that women are blamed for acts and words of aggression towards them. People say things like “It takes two to tango” or “She probably provoked him”. I do not care how much someone provokes someone else; treating them like that is not okay. It is not okay to put somebody down. It is not okay to be aggressive or to stand over someone. In general, men are bigger. I am five foot two, and I am probably the shortest person in the Western Australian Parliament, as everybody keeps reminding me. Most people in here tower over me. Although I am feisty and mouthy, and a lot of people would probably run screaming from me if they said something to me because I would not take it, it is still intimidating for me at five foot two to have a six-foot-odd man stand over me. It blocks out the light. I am 53 years old, and I can take care of myself, but what about a 13-year-old girl who has a 15-year-old boy standing over her saying, “You know you want it. You deserve it. You’ve asked for it”? None of that is acceptable.

As adults, we should be making sure that we are the role models. We need to think carefully about the language we use around young people and other people. We need to role model respectful behaviour. That includes not talking over other people. Men should stop talking over women. Men should stop explaining what we have just said. It is very annoying. We need to address disrespectful behaviour when we see it and call it out instead of walking past. We need to stop making excuses or staying silent when we see things that are disrespectful. Again, the respect we show each other as adults helps to shape our society’s standards. We should try to live up to those standards. Thank you.

HON SHELLEY PAYNE (Agricultural) [12.19 pm]: We have only a few minutes left and I note that my colleague Hon Sandra Carr also stood to speak, so I will be quick. It is great to be able to talk to the motion. It is also great to see Hon Martin Pritchard back in the chamber. I thank him for bringing this motion on education to the chamber. I have three children and my last one is in year 12 this year. He told me it is my last first day of school for any of my children this year. It is very exciting. They all attended the local high school in Esperance, and loved it. It will be a new era next year.

I want to talk about a few things. Hon Martin Pritchard talked about the \$31.7 million the government has put into career practitioners, and I want to talk about how some of those things happen on the ground. I talk a lot about Esperance but my electorate covers Narrogin and Katanning as well. Katanning is very multicultural. There is a new principal down there at Katanning Senior High School. Mr Innocent Chikwama started at the school in April 2021

Hon Martin Pritchard; Hon Klara Andric; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Donna Faragher; Hon Lorna Harper; Hon Shelley Payne; Hon Sandra Carr

and became the principal at the beginning of last year. He is originally from Zimbabwe. He is full of energy and does an amazing job. Katanning is one of the schools that got a career practitioner. At the beginning of last year, a lovely lady, Heather Van Den Rydt, started as the school's career practitioner. It has been great for Katanning to have someone who is specifically there to link the kids in the community with the community, the businesses and the support groups out there. They had their first career expo last year. I had the opportunity to go down and see the expo. They had a whole bunch of different businesses from around Katanning for the kids to talk to. They also had Mindflight⁷ there with virtual reality goggles that kids could put on and look at different career opportunities. ATC Work Smart, which helps youth with employment and training opportunities, was there as well. It is something that is really working great. Esperance Senior High School also has a career practitioner.

I want to thank the Leader of the House, as did Hon Klara Andric, for her commitment in her former role as Minister for Education.

Katanning, as I said, is a multicultural area. The shire is driving a \$7 million project to build an early childhood hub. It will include three essential facilities—an early childhood education and care service, the community and child health offices as well as a family centre. It is a really great project. I firmly believe that we need to start supporting parents when their children are really young so that when all the kids are off to kindy they have all been supported and are at the same level. It makes it a lot easier for the teachers. I was pleased to go down to Katanning late last year and present them with a Lotterywest grant for another \$500 000. We know the cost of building has gone up, and this will help fill some of the gaps. I am looking forward to this project getting off the ground, with construction hopefully starting this year.

I mentioned the need to support parents with really young children as well. I want to commend Nulsen Primary School in Esperance, which has taken the initiative to set up a parent and family centre on the primary school grounds for the key reason of being able to support parents with younger children so that the kids coming into kindy are mostly at the same level. I see more and more in the schools how this is really important. I visited Castletown Primary School, which is looking for areas within the school to bring in support agencies, whether it is for speech pathology or occupational therapy services, to make it easier for parents. Parents will not have to pick up their kids and take them out of school; they can actually get the services that they need there.

I want to briefly mention some of the work that the chaplains are doing at Esperance Senior High School. I know we have put money into the school for a psychologist as well as the chaplains. I had the opportunity to meet Roslyn Woodhouse, who is a school chaplain at Esperance Senior High School. I want to give her a shout-out for the work she is doing putting together the school breakfast program, all through volunteers. It has been a really good program, getting children in to have their breakfast. As well there is the work student services is doing there. We have not had a canteen at the school this year and it has been really great for the school that student services has taken it on and is doing lunches for the kids. I will leave it there.

HON SANDRA CARR (Agricultural) [12.24 pm]: I will very briefly also support Hon Martin Pritchard's motion. I thank him very much for raising it. Obviously, as a former teacher I place significant value on education and the contribution the government makes to education.

I will very briefly touch on some things that have happened in the last few years in my own region and the electorate of Lara Dalton, member for Geraldton. In 2019, there was a \$20 million investment in Champion Bay Senior High School to improve the infrastructure for students. The investment paid dividends very, very quickly. Last year, Champion Bay Senior High School year 7 and 9 students were rated some of the top in the region in NAPLAN. I congratulate that school. It has also lifted morale in the school, which is seen in the performance of staff. School principal Julie Campbell, who has been at the school for some 15 years, even during its prior incarnation as John Wilcock high school, has recently been nominated—she is the only regional female principal to be nominated—for the Department of Education's women of achievement award. I congratulate principal Julie Campbell. She is a great principal and also a great contributor to and supporter of people across the region. I wish her all the very best in those awards.

Motion lapsed, pursuant to standing orders.