

Hon James Chown; Hon Robin Scott; Hon Rick Mazza; Hon Diane Evers; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; President;
Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Colin Tincknell; Hon Darren West; Hon Martin Aldridge; Acting President; Hon
Colin Holt

McGOWAN GOVERNMENT — REGIONAL WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Motion

HON JIM CHOWN (Agricultural) [1.06 pm]: I move —

That this house expresses its concerns regarding the McGowan government's policies and decisions affecting regional Western Australia.

There is absolutely no doubt that the McGowan government's chances of having a positive election outcome in March 2021 in regional Western Australia are virtually zero; as are mine, I might add! But I am just a humble Liberal backbencher who has worked extremely hard for my electorate. The government, quite frankly, has turned its back on regional Western Australia and continues to do so. The die has been cast out there. Regional Western Australians have long memories and they do not forgive governments. I will reflect on some of the past decisions, from a policy perspective, that have been proposed and then backflipped on by this government, to the detriment of a great number of communities out there.

I will start with the Schools of the Air; the government was going to take it away. The outcry was that great that the government immediately said, "No, this is not a good idea, so we'll reinstate the Schools of the Air." But it went further; it slashed funding to all 103 of our community resource centres. That has been resolved over time, but regional Western Australians remember.

The government also attempted to socialise the WA rock lobster industry—one of the most efficient and sustainable fisheries in the world, let alone in this nation. Had it not been for the efforts of this house, which sent the message to the McGowan government that this would not be entertained, can members imagine where that industry would be today? If that had been carried out, it would have undermined the equity of hardworking fishing families and their employees, up and down the west coast of this state. If there had been no pushback against the government from the Legislative Council on what has happened to the industry as a result of the coronavirus, it would not be operating and would have no chance of operating in the future because the equity in the businesses that they have built up over many, many years would have been undermined, and the coronavirus would stop them exporting into their greatest market, China.

These are the sorts of decisions that we have come to expect from the McGowan government in regional Western Australia. It tried to shut down Moora Residential College, but the Liberal Party bailed it out. The Liberal Party put up \$7.5 million and faith has been restored in that community with regard to the educational requirements of boarders and people who cannot afford to send their children to school in Perth; they send them to Moora Residential College. What a great outcome. Of course, we, as Liberals in this place, fought hard and were successful in stopping the increase in mining royalties, which would have once again made unemployment in regional Western Australia a very good example of this government's absolute disregard for the people out there. It has nothing to do with the gold price. It is all about employment and encouraging commercial enterprise to get on with the job in an industry that does a lot of exploration with very little chance of finding anything, and, when it does, the recovery rate is very expensive, yet they still do it. They all hope that the gold price keeps going up, because that makes the industry viable. It has nothing to do with that. This was just a cash grab in regional Western Australia by a hungry McGowan government, and it is still going on. The incompetence of members is still being exemplified on a daily basis.

We have heard a lot about drought in this state, certainly in pastoral areas. We have seen the headlines about it costing \$11 million to cart water in the Lake Grace area. I will read a press statement put out on 30 January 2020 by David Littleproud about what this government cannot do. It states —

Minister for Drought David Littleproud is urging the WA government to speed up delivery of drought support after the state lost \$1.35 million because the money wasn't spent in time.

The Coalition Government has topped up WA's Emergency On-Farm Water Infrastructure Rebate with another \$2.35 million for drought-hit livestock and horticulture farmers.

The scheme pays eligible farmers 25 per cent of the cost of installing new bores and desilting dams, up to \$25,000.

Minister Littleproud said the Commonwealth committed to \$4.62 million to WA in 2018 but the McGowan government has been slow to pass on the cash.

"They didn't even start accepting applications until May 2019," Minister Littleproud said.

"I want WA to get its fair share, but its own state government is holding it back."

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“All the state has to do is hand on the money—the scheme won’t cost them a cent.

“If the money isn’t spent in a financial year it goes back to the Federal Treasury and the McGowan Government knows this.

“In the first year WA didn’t approve a single application, losing \$1.35 million in funding.

“Sitting back and letting this money slip away is just crazy.

“The Commonwealth has provided another \$2.35 million this year and I want WA to use it.

“It’s basic math—you have to be in it to win it and the WA Government has stayed out.

We can imagine what is said around the McGowan cabinet table: “How much is it? Oh, it’s only a couple of million dollars; it’s not worth the paperwork.” I can tell members that \$25 000 to a drought-stricken farmer, or any farmer who cannot find water, is a lot of money when he is borrowing funds to desilt his dams and put down new bores. Certainly, in the rangelands, it costs up to \$40 000 to put down a new bore, so \$25 000 would go a long way.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan interjected.

Hon JIM CHOWN: I am quoting a press release from a federal minister, minister!

The PRESIDENT: Order, members!

Hon JIM CHOWN: I suggest to the minister that this press release is correct and she needs to do a bit of homework. I am more than happy to see what applications she has put forward for this first tranche of money in the time period I have just used as an example. The minister can prove me wrong. How many growers have received the \$25 000? None! The minister should do her homework before she gets up and challenges me on these matters.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: I didn’t get up and challenge you! You moved it.

Hon JIM CHOWN: The minister is interjecting.

The PRESIDENT: Members, I remind you that only one person is on their feet, so only one voice should be heard by Hansard.

Hon JIM CHOWN: Thank you, Madam President. I think the minister doth protest too much. As I have said, I am more than happy to accept at some stage later in the day an example of what has been stated in the press release of the federal minister for water and drought. She has the information there; let us see what happens. The press release goes on to state —

“Queensland and South Australia match Federal funds so farmers can get 50 per cent back on eligible projects. The WA Government provides nothing extra.

That is a very true statement. Is that not correct, minister; that is a true statement?

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: What was that?

Hon JIM CHOWN: I have only a set time, so if the minister cannot keep up, I am sorry about that.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan interjected.

Hon JIM CHOWN: I am moving on.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Hon Jim Chown, you should be directing your comments to me. You certainly should not be inviting people to interject, because that just makes it very unruly and difficult for Hansard to note down what you are saying. Hon Jim Chown, if would you like to continue.

Hon JIM CHOWN: Thank you, Madam President, and my apologies to Hansard.

Something else that has come to my attention concerns me greatly. Last year, we had the bill to make some amendments to the Animal Welfare Act and this house decided that only clauses 1 to 8 would be adopted, and the part of the process that was not adopted or entertained by the house was the introduction of designated general inspectors who could visit any vehicle or property without a warrant or the permission of the owner and see what was going on at that property from an animal welfare perspective and also issue on-the-spot fines. The RSPCA is a great institution for animal welfare and I respect it highly, but it has taken the stance that a designated general inspector needs the power to issue infringement notices for minor offences, that enforcement options and compliance needs to be increased—that is what I mean by on-the-spot fines—and that inspectors should be given improved powers of entry, similar to fishing inspectors, who can go to a person’s house without any introduction and look in their fridge.

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The RSPCA also has a policy against live exports. From a regional perspective, live exports are absolutely essential. They underline the value of stock; they underline the value of cattle and sheep. The animal welfare protocols today are outstanding. Yes, I agree that the death rates on these vessels have evolved over time, but there is a policy in the RSPCA and certainly in this government that they do not want live exports at all. The act is now under review. There have been a number of consultations around the state on this matter. Public consultation is an essential part of the review of an act, as are submissions. What concerns me is the make-up of the minister's independent review panel. The panel has five members: Linda Black, the committee chair; Dr Di Evans, a vet; Dominique Blache, an academic; Dr David Marshall, a vet; and Catherine Marriott. Linda Black, who is the chair, is a prosecutor for the chief inspector of the RSPCA. That is fine; the minister can have someone like that chairing the panel, but there is no balance to offset her opinions. Even more alarmingly, Dr Di Evans was the co-founder of Vets Against Live Export. She initiated VALE. On the website of Sentient, the veterinary voice in animal welfare, it states —

Di also co-founded Vets Against Live Export ... but was unable to declare this publicly as she was working for the WA Department of Agriculture and Food at that time.

Quite frankly, the minister has on her panel somebody who is absolutely deceitful. This lady, who was working for the department at the time, has publicly stated that she hid from her employers the fact that she was a co-founder of Vets Against Live Export. I find that outrageous. There is no balance on this panel.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan interjected.

Hon JIM CHOWN: The minister will get her chance to get up and talk at some stage in the future. This is my motion and I am talking now.

The minister's panel is tilted against live exports. If she was going to do the right job and have some independence on this panel, at the very least she would have somebody from the industry itself, not academics, not people who lobby and work for the RSPCA and not somebody who has declared that they are against live exports and hid that fact from their employer at the time they were a public servant when, I assume, the department supported live exports. Quite frankly, I am aghast. Minister, I cannot see the independence of this panel at all, and that concerns all of regional Western Australia. As somebody who represents regional Western Australia, at the very least, we would expect that the minister's independent advisory panel would have some balance to it. I will move on.

Recently, there was an absolute outrage regarding animal welfare requirements in Victoria. It is yet to be proven, of course, but there is great suspicion that illegal clearing took place and about 120 koalas were maimed and killed. I refer to Mr Graham Readfearn's article dated Monday, 3 February 2020, which states —

A major incident response has been set up at the site, on private land near Cape Bridgewater, with koalas being treated by vets for starvation and broken bones.

...

The Victorian environment minister, Lily D'Ambrosio, said on Monday the event was "devastating" for the koala population in the Portland region and pledged the government would do "everything possible" to bring the perpetrators to account.

"Every Victorian can ... feel not only appalled, deeply saddened and heartbroken, but angry. I am absolutely angry."

I go back to a question to the minister from me regarding the cattle deaths at Yandeyarra to which she responded —

I thank the member for some notice of question. I am just fascinated by what the member thinks that perhaps we should have done—let the cattle die or close down the community?

In a GWN interview on 25 November 2019, the minister said in regard to this matter —

"In a normal wet season, this wouldn't have happened so people went away and left the place unattended and the rains didn't come and their watering points weren't in good order."

The minister continued —

"Occasionally there is no person taking responsibility for ensuring that the water infrastructure is properly invested in and kept in place."

Let me tell the minister: if it was the beginning of June and I threw my dog's water bowl on the lawn and said, "Mate, I'm off for a month; it's going to rain eventually; you may get a drink", and that dog died of thirst, I would be charged under the act, and rightly so. But on this occasion there is just silence. There is a conspiracy of silence from the minister's perspective. No charges have been laid, and that excuse does not wash with the regional

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community. There is hypocrisy here regarding the minister's review of the Animal Welfare Act and what she is actually doing about animal welfare when thousands of stock die. I have spoken to contractors who were on site and had seen the photographs of what took place, but they had to sign confidentiality agreements before they got the work, but what they told me was absolutely horrifying. If those photos were made public today, the minister would have to answer to not only this place but also the public at large. I am sure the minister has seen them. She should talk to some of the pastoralists who operate the stations next door. I have a letter to *The West Australian* on this matter from a Mr Don Wright from Leschenault. Don hits the matter right on the nail when he says —

A man is fined \$2500 for killing a feral kookaburra but no one is charged when hundreds of cattle die slow, agonising deaths from lack of water and feed on northern stations. Why?

That is the burning question.

In answer to a question I put to the minister on 27 November 2019 when I asked about the number of cattle and how the repayments would be made, as she had stated, she said in part (4) of her response —

Based on trucking information from the national vendor declaration system, the total number of cattle transported from the property during the recent muster period was 8 007 head.

Where did they go, minister? Did they go to an abattoir or another property? Did they go to an abattoir because those 8 000 cattle were in such shocking condition they could not be moved any further than the local abattoir? If they went to another property for feeding, where did they go? The information the minister has provided on this incident is minimal. She has been asked and asked again and has not given full disclosure on this at all. It is the greatest animal welfare issue this state has ever seen. Quite frankly, minister, I assume the condition of those 8 007 head was so deplorable that they went to an abattoir. They would not have gone anywhere else in the Kimberley because the Kimberley was in such a great drought situation that none of the local growers would have taken them. The cattle would not have come down to the south west because the cost would have been too expensive. I assume that these cattle went to an abattoir.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan interjected.

Hon JIM CHOWN: The minister is more than happy to give everyone the facts on this matter!

I think certainly my motion rings true. I think regional Western Australians will not vote Labor. Why would they, given how they have been dealt with by this McGowan government over the last three years? The government could throw money at them and pave the streets with gold, but they have made up their minds. They do not trust the McGowan government. They will never trust Labor again. This government has overpromised and under-delivered.

Then there is this animal welfare issue, on which the minister's disclosure at this stage is no disclosure at all. I have asked a number of questions here, and I am more than happy to hear what the minister has to say. She should be looking at the members on her independent advisory panel on the review of the Animal Welfare Act. She should have dug down a bit deeper to see what quality is on the panel in light of her stated bias and the bias on the panel, which is meant to be independent.

HON ROBIN SCOTT (Mining and Pastoral) [1.26 pm]: I am very happy to support Hon Jim Chown's motion. Every request for improvements in regional Western Australia ends up at the bottom of the ladder. For health issues, regional residents have to wait sometimes weeks to see a doctor. If they need to see a specialist, that usually entails a trip to Perth. This situation applies to all major towns in the Mining and Pastoral Region, such as Kalgoorlie, Karratha, Port Hedland, Broome and Kununurra.

Promises for the delivery of an MRI machine to Kalgoorlie Health Campus, the upgrade of Laverton Hospital and the upgrade of Meekatharra Hospital are all promises and no deliveries. When I ask a question without notice, some other department is always blamed for the hold-up, such as the WA Country Health Service or Building Management and Works. Ministers have to go to them for an update. They should not have to ask them anything. Ministers should tell these departments what they want done and how they are expected to do it. What stops ministers saying to their departments, "We want this done on this time line, so get it done"? That is what happens in the real world.

On regional roads, I refer to the Wiluna–Meekatharra road. There has been 60 years of promises from various governments and still no action. There are still 124 kilometres of unsealed highway. I wonder whether members have any idea just how much upgrading the Carnarvon–Meekatharra road needs so that people could visit Mt Augustus without having to travel on gravel roads. That would enhance the tourist statement that WA is the road trip state.

Airfares have to be the most ridiculous cost for regional residents. I travelled to Kalgoorlie just before Christmas. A return ticket cost me \$1 680. I flew Virgin and it took one hour, five minutes each way. Virgin takes off from terminal 1, the international terminal. When I was walking to the carpark in Perth, I saw a sign for Emirates that

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indicated that a return flight to Glasgow was \$1 350—that is Glasgow in Scotland. We cannot compare the prices. The flight time to Scotland, by the way, is 19 hours each way.

Hon Colin Tincknell: Did you buy a ticket?

Hon ROBIN SCOTT: No; I did not.

I also asked for a reduction in payroll tax for the regions and that fell on deaf ears. I wanted to encourage employment in the regions. This government deliberately shut Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety offices in Norseman and Coolgardie, promising to re-open them after refurbishment—just another nail in the coffin for regional towns. To appease its mating partner, the Greens, all mining approvals take months, and sometimes years, to get a rubber stamp. Prospectors, small miners, exploration companies and large companies need confidence to go forward into the future. The regions are crying out for water. This government will not accept that we are in a drought situation. The government refers to it as the “D” word when asked a question without notice. The pastoralists are desperate for water, but what does this government offer them? It offers dog fences, cell fencing and carbon farming, and forces them to diversify their livelihood.

There are 36 members in this chamber. How would we feel if overnight we were told, “Eighteen seats have to go because the state can no longer afford you, but don’t worry, we will offer you jobs in the local bakery or the local garden centre, or you can start a bed and breakfast business”? I am sure that all members, like me, love this job. Guess what? Pastoralists love being pastoralists. They want to grow wool and beef. All they are asking for right now is water to help them through this tough time. Do not forget that regional Western Australia is the ATM of this state. Without regional Western Australia, the standard of living of people throughout the state will decrease. If, for example, Kalgoorlie were to fail, 25 000 people would come to Perth to look for jobs. That would put a strain on our health and education services. Many of those people will want our job, and, believe me, many of them are capable of doing this job. To the major parties, I say, “An election is on the horizon. Ignore the regions at your peril.” Thank you.

HON RICK MAZZA (Agricultural) [1.31 pm]: I thank Hon Jim Chown for bringing to this house this motion about regional Western Australia. The regions suffer a lot from not having enough resources and essential services. It is not always about the big matters like health and policing and the other major things that we talk about a lot in this place; sometimes it is more localised.

A few weeks ago, I was in Northampton and met with the chief executive officer of the Shire of Northampton, Garry Keeffe, about some of the issues that are affecting Northampton. One of those issues, surprisingly, is the success of the Minister for Tourism, Paul Papalia. He has done a great job in promoting Western Australian tourism. He has managed to secure direct flights from certain countries to bring tourists into this state. The problem in the Northampton area is that busloads of people are arriving to visit Pink Lake and the Kalbarri Skywalk and other things, but there are not enough toilets, parking and other essential things to cater for those tourists. The Shire of Northampton is receiving no funding from the state government, and it is expected to provide, on a very small rate base, facilities for those tourists. Unfortunately, because of the coronavirus outbreak, tourist numbers have fallen significantly. That has affected a lot of industries in Western Australia, not the least being the crayfish industry. If we want to encourage tourists from other countries to experience Western Australia, at the very least we should provide facilities to enable them to enjoy that experience, rather than perhaps go away with the bad experience that they were not able to access toilets and it was difficult to find parking spaces for their buses, or whatever the case may be. There are certainly a lot of localised issues in the regions that need to be dealt with by increased investment.

Last month, I visited a number of shires. One of the common threads was the need for more palliative care beds. The Shire of Lake Grace in particular has complained that it has only one palliative care bed. That is insufficient. The local hospital is struggling a lot with aged care.

Hon Darren West interjected.

Hon RICK MAZZA: That is good. I am glad to hear that, Hon Darren West.

That was quite a common thread among a lot of the shire councils that I visited.

I did not meet with the Shire of Merredin, but I did see a constituent in Merredin, a gentleman by the name of Keith Perry. Keith’s daughter has been fostering a lot of children who are in a crisis situation because of domestic violence and who need emergency accommodation while their families are dealing with those issues. He told me that at any one time in Merredin, 10 to 12 children could be in need of crisis care because of family issues. He said that he has contacted the department for child services on a number of occasions to try to resolve some of the issues and provide more facilities and services for kids in crisis. However, as yet, despite meetings and promises,

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that has not materialised. In his mind, that is a very urgent and pressing matter for the people in that shire council. There are some very localised issues that need to be dealt with.

We also need to look at investment in regional WA. Only yesterday, I had a briefing about the next leg of Metronet. I worked out that over the next few years, the cost of putting in 52 kilometres of rail on the three legs of Metronet will be \$40 million a kilometre, without railcars. That is an enormous investment into the metropolitan area, for 52 kilometres of rail. I get the population differential issue. However, people in regional Western Australia often have to travel long distances on roads that carry heavy traffic and are in desperate need of repair, and they also need investment in their area.

Yesterday, I asked a question without notice about water deficient areas and the need for those shires to be able to access water. Part (5) of the answer was that the government will invest \$1.5 million in future infrastructure. I think that is very light on for something as essential as water for the people who live in those towns and for the stock on those properties that need to be watered. I also visited Cunderdin, which has not been declared a water deficient area. I am a bit surprised that no other shire has asked to be declared. The president and the chief executive officer of the Shire of Dumbleyung have been in communication with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and are desperately trying to get declared. They have major issues. They are very concerned that the shire has only a few weeks of water left. I think that \$1.5 million for water deficient areas is very light on, considering that the government is spending \$40 million a kilometre on rail in the city.

I believe the member's motion is relevant. We need to put a lot of focus onto providing essential services in regional Western Australia, whether that be for health, policing or water, to cater for tourists, or to do many of the other things that are required in regional areas. Greater investment is certainly required in the regions.

HON DIANE EVERS (South West) [1.37 pm]: I am pleased that we get a chance in this place to speak about the regions, because although we speak about them from time to time, it is good to be reminded that 95 per cent of the area of this state is outside the metropolitan area.

I have to say that personally, I have not seen a whole lot of change. I know that some good projects are happening. But scattered road and infrastructure projects are happening, as they usually do, with a top-down approach—"This is where we think it should be"—and that is how it will continue. I do not see that there is any real plan. In the south west, we need a transport strategy that looks forward not just five or 10 years, but 30 years, at how we will move people and goods around. I see a great future for our regions. I see that with the lowering of energy costs as we move more and more to renewables. With greater use of technology, there is less human involvement in each activity, so we will be able to do a lot of manufacturing in the south west and a lot of further value-adding to our resources, not just in the south west but throughout the region. We have to look forward to this time, because that is where Australia can really make a difference. All along, we have not done that in regional areas, because we say that power costs are too high, the cost of human labour is too high and transport costs are too high. That is why we need a transport strategy for the south west and the entire regional area, if we can get to that.

As I have said, all I see is a top-down approach. That is usually done through the development commissions. A bunch of funding is earmarked for some project, and so long as people fill in the forms and address each of the criteria, they might get their funding. But it does not look at what people in the regions really want. That is why I would like to push the idea of taking a deliberative approach, whereby we go to the regions, invite a wide selection of people, choose a randomly selected number to represent the area —

Hon Darren West interjected.

Hon DIANE EVERS: Exactly, but that is not a deliberative process. I am talking about things like the citizens' assemblies, which we have heard about recently—places where we actually listen to people and allow them to influence what happens. Minister MacTiernan is well aware of what I am talking about because she used the same process in the past and it worked well. It created policies and plans that are still in use 15 years later. I want to see more of that happening. I think that as the year progresses and as we come up to the election, we will need to listen to people in regional areas in particular, because they have been neglected up to this point. I know that we have a two-party system and that we say that we represent everybody, but, really, we are very metro-based. We have to acknowledge that in what we say and do. People in regional areas are very resilient; they get on with it, even when we do not provide for them.

We need a deliberative process so that people can actually decide. One place in which change is needed is royalties for regions. It was introduced 11 years ago with an object to "promote and facilitate economic, business and social development". Wait—economic and business? Are they not the same thing? Did we miss the third idea? The environment has just been forgotten. Usually we talk about economic, social and environmental development, but

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royalties for regions was set up to promote and facilitate economic, business and social development. I would like us to have a better look at that, because when I go around the region and talk to not just Greens members but also an awful lot of people who are involved in Landcare work and environmental bodies and who are trying to repair the landscape and reduce pests, they tell me that they are struggling to keep their needs, concerns and worries relevant because we keep going back to the economic and business group—wait, sorry, the same one that we keep going back to. I will just call it “economic” for now. They say that they need something to reassure them that when they start a project, they will actually be able to carry it out. Any member who has ever done any gardening would know that we can pull out the weeds one day but they will be back in a month and we will have to pull them out again. That is what the environment is about. We have to keep going back and doing it over and over again. People are getting very tired of continually fighting for the things that they know are important, and those things are becoming more and more important. Every day we hear of more weather and climate events—fires, droughts, floods and storms. Everything is picking up. It is getting more and more difficult. There are very few people now who will say that climate change is not happening, but there are a few people who will say, “Yes, but humans didn’t do it so we’ll just deal with it; we’ll just build bigger walls and cut down more trees to avoid it.” I have to say that that is not going to work at all. Those people who realise that it is happening and acknowledge that humans caused it should be able to go the next step and say that humans can do something about it. What we need to do is re-green the earth. We need more trees and more carbon in the soil. We have to start working on that, and that is going to happen in our regional areas.

For the past 10 000 years, humans have been desertifying the planet, and we are continuing to do it at a quicker and quicker rate. These days we can turn good, solid, wonderful, productive soil into desert very quickly, and it is the wrong thing to be doing. Just look at what happens in the Amazon. Every time a bit of forest is cleared for more cattle, the intention is to use it for, I think, only 10 years and they then move on to another area. If we want to help people in the regions, we need to look at some of the schemes that have been going on in the mining and pastoral area. I do not know whether any member has read *The Wooleen Way*, but it is about how some people took a station that was not doing very well and repaired it; they made the soil more productive. There are examples of this all over the place but they get very little presence in the media because, of course, they are good stories of good people doing good things on their own, without the help of industry, big business, the economy and all that. They are just doing something to make their place better and to make their soils more productive.

That is what we need to do if we want to help the regions, and I think we need to. There are still 18 of us in this place from regional areas—that is, half of this place. Who is going to win the regions? The answer to that question is really important to me, because I need to know that no matter what government is in here, it is doing good and important things out there. I know members will talk to the people they know. We all know a lot of people in the regions, but we only talk to those people we know and we keep hearing the same thing: they are doing all right and they want to keep it that way. But that is not going to be all right for the next generation—the younger people coming in. I would like us to start going out to the regions and to stop listening to the individuals who normally show up saying, “Yes, I’ll take that little bit of funding for this,” and find out from others what they are looking for and what they need to get people out there. What is happening is that people are moving into the regions. I do not have the population statistics in front of me, but when I am down there talking to people, I find that new young families are moving down south to Balingup, Bridgetown and Pemberton. I even think that Pemberton’s school has doubled the number of its year 1 students this year. Young families are going down there. They know how to earn a living down there without having significant amounts of land. The land is still very expensive, but they are earning a living on a smaller block or they are doing remote work and working with a good internet system, when it works. There are all sorts of opportunities and possibilities down there.

There is a lot of work available for those people who are going down there, if they are willing to do the work. Sometimes people, especially on farms and in agricultural areas, struggle to get people to work down there. People want a sense of community, especially if they put in hours volunteering and helping to make it a better place to work and live. They want to work with their neighbours to create something down there. I think people in the regions have the answers. They may not speak out loudly all that often, but they have some of the answers. We need to look at what they are asking for and try to give it to them.

As I said, a lot of what we are looking at is within the environmental area. I know that \$7 million has been given to some regional groups, but they have probably spent thousands of hours applying for that funding. Those hours should be put into getting more volunteers or doing on-the-ground work. I put up a bill last year suggesting that we put 10 per cent of royalties for regions into that work. It was a long shot to guarantee \$100 million each year, but we should be funding it in the same way that community resource centres were funded. I think we all agree that they were valuable things. We could give environmental groups out in the regions maybe \$30 million just so they can always keep their people going, so they can have staff, have an office and then work on getting more people in to do more environmental work. I know that the government is never going to be able to afford to do all

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the environmental works, just like the government is never going to be able to afford to pay all those bushfire volunteers in all those brigades who are out there working to save people's homes, lives and properties. Those people are working as volunteers because they know that the government could never afford to pay for it all. The same thing happens in the environmental area. If we could give them a little bit just to keep them going, to keep people working together, we would reap the benefits over and over, not only in the environment, but also in social benefits. That is why people move down to the regions—they want that social life, to work with the community and to know their neighbours. Even if their neighbours live 10 kilometres away, people still want to know about them; they care about them and are happy to see them from time to time. It is a very different lifestyle. That is where I think we can help. We need to focus on regional areas and help to build them up. I know there are all sorts of plans, and that Collie is getting a lot and the development commissions are giving away a lot, but we are not getting far, are we? We may get one large organisation or one large business from time to time, and it may work for a period of time; it may fulfil its government obligations but when the government stops funding it, they take off, take the assets, move overseas or whatever it is. We need to develop the people who live down there. We have to give them what they need. We have to give them good educational opportunities in their regional communities and good medical facilities so they do not have to come to Perth for a simple consultation. We need to develop a way so that we can assist them to continue to live in regional areas, and, as those communities develop, more people will go down there. As more people move to the regional areas, prosperity will come, because people are like that. People develop ideas, businesses and enterprises. If we help them, we can use the materials around them. We can have an electrical distribution system whereby people are making their energy where they are living and using it locally. Then we will not have those large losses when it is extended to great distances.

Hon Robin Scott: Sorry, I find it so amusing when you talk about electricity, when you know nothing about it.

Hon DIANE EVERS: Yes, I know. Hon Robin Scott is an electrician. I would like to hear him talk about accounting one day too!

Hon Robin Scott: I do not know anything about accounting.

Hon DIANE EVERS: I do not know much about electricity, but I know it is important in our future.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: I think we should just restrict ourselves to the motion in front of us, if you would.

Hon DIANE EVERS: Let us get back to helping the regions. There is a lot promise there, there are a lot of possibilities, but we do not need to be fighting against them; we need to support them in the areas and industries they want to develop.

There is another issue that a number of people across the state are very concerned about and that is climate change. There is another part to it. We often talk about energy and becoming carbon neutral, but CO₂ is at 400 parts per million already—if we count equivalents as well, I think we are looking at about 480 or more. With that, the world has changed and we are on a cycle for increasing temperatures. The way governments move, we are not going to be carbon neutral or fully on renewable energy for some time. It is going to take a lot more fires, a lot more storms and a lot more devastation before governments can move and understand this. In addition to slowing down emissions, we need to look at drawdown. In the regional areas, drawdown is where it is going to happen, because we need stronger, healthier and more resilient forests, and more forests, more plantations. We need to look at agriculture increasing the amount of carbon in our soil. I appreciate the minister's actions in doing this, and I support all the way trying to give the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development every support we can to make sure that we are encouraging farmers to do this, because they are doing it anyway. They are getting together and having meetings all over the place. They are learning about new ideas. They may not like the words “regenerative” or “organic”, but they are hearing that the farmers who have been doing this and who have increased carbon in the soil, have more water in their soil as well. They become a little bit more resilient to drought, and that is something we are going to have to look at. We have to make our regional areas resilient.

As I said, humans have degraded landscapes over millennia. That is where we need to be looking for more land. We need to reclaim the stuff we have destroyed in the past, and we can do it with plants and biology. The science is out there. I do not expect to be the one to teach anybody anything in here. Members all have staff and they know where they can go to get information. They probably know a lot of this themselves anyway. I just feel that I need to be in here to remind them that there is a bigger picture out there than what happens in here. Yes, what we deal with in here is very important. A lot of it has social aspects that we really need to look after, but we need to look after the environment and we need to address the issues of climate and not just say that it is a federal issue or that China pollutes so much, so we should just let China do so and we cannot make a difference. We may just be a small part of it, but the world is changing around us. We have only to look at the uptake of electric vehicles. Other

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countries are picking them up very quickly. We are the laggards in this. It is a big country, I understand. I do not have one yet either. The 400-kilometre drive to Albany makes it a bit tricky.

Given that we are going to go through another election next year, we had better see some ramping up of members listening to people in the community and the regional areas. We need to open up a deliberative session. We need to advertise and let people know we are going to find out what they want in whatever region we are looking at. We need to open it up. We might get 10 000 people who say that they want to be in it because they want their voices heard, and then we select people to randomly represent the group we are looking at. We could possibly even select a few more young people, because it is their future we are talking about. We could pick out 80 to 100 people and go through a facilitated process by which they can call in the scientists, businesses, the mining industry or whatever industry they are looking at to find out all the information they need so that they can deliberate properly and come up with some solutions. They do not even need to be solutions; they could come up with some great ideas, and maybe then we could invest in those ideas and help build them. We just need to look at the renewable energy industry—wow! Ten years ago, would anyone in here have said that it was going to get to the point that it is at now? Western Australians have picked up renewables really fast, and here we are just running around trying to pick up the pieces, as Synergy declines in value and loses money. We are a bit slow off the mark, but I believe we can do better, and I think it is can start in the regions. We will be asking what the future is for WA and in what areas can we increase our exports or economic activity by helping people in the regions to do things that they feel are important.

HON ALANNAH MacTIERNAN (North Metropolitan — Minister for Regional Development) [1.55 pm]:

I have to say that I have listened to many of the presentations, Hon Rick Mazza aside, and I get a very different picture of regional Western Australia. It sounds like this depressed, terrible place where absolutely nothing is happening. Nothing can be further from the truth. Right from Esperance to Wyndham we have a vital state and we have an enormous variety of industries happening. I want to say that we are absolutely listening to the people of regional Western Australia, because we, the Labor Party, are in fact the party that has the most regional representatives in this Parliament. We are absolutely deeply engaged. We accept that of course there are challenges. We absolutely understand that there are challenges, and at the same time we also understand that there are budgetary constraints that we need to move with, but we are very optimistic about the future of our regions in the work we are doing delivering billions of dollars of infrastructure projects all over this state, building schools and hospitals, and supporting regional economic development and those businesses in the regions that want to expand. Our regional economic grants have been a great hit and we are seeing that they are helping those regional economies around the state diversify. We just do not accept the narrative of these regions as depressed, lonely, unrepresented places. Of course, there is always going to be a lively culture of wanting more and pushing things forward, but I think most regional Western Australians are very reasonable people, and notwithstanding the plastic cow culture that emerged for a couple of years, people really do want to see us focusing on the things that are really going to be delivering change.

The one reasonable thing I have heard Hon Jim Chown say in Parliament was his assessment of his prospects at the next election, but I want to address some of the issues he raised—the ones I could actually make a little bit of sense of.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Most of the other speakers were heard in comparative silence. It is really difficult for Hansard and there has been this increasing bubble of noise, so if you just let the minister say what she says and listen to her, please.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: It was very interesting that Hon Jim Chown focused on Minister Littleproud and his great words of wisdom. I would be interested to hear from Hon Jim Chown about what he thought of Minister Littleproud's assessment of what areas in Western Australia were in need of most assistance. Seeing as Hon Jim Chown is obviously a very close mate of Minister Littleproud, perhaps he could help us understand why the Shires of Laverton, Yalgoo and Wiluna were excluded from any assistance under the drought fund. The local governments of Busselton, Bridgetown and Albany are all getting money, but areas that had exceptionally bad rainfall in 2019 are not getting any. Anyhow, Minister Littleproud really messed that up, and then he started this rant about how WA had not approved a single application. We understand from the Minister for Water, Dave Kelly, that in fact that rebate money was not available until some six or seven months ago. He was not able to distribute the money because it was not available. It did not become available right until the end of the financial year. We had no idea about it. Nobody told us that the money was not going to be rolled over. As Minister Kelly said —

“I just wish he would talk to us rather than take pot shots ... across the Nullarbor ...

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I hope that we can improve those relationships because we very much want to work constructively with the commonwealth on the Future Drought Fund. Minister Kelly and I have put forward a whole series of projects for which we would like commonwealth co-funding because we absolutely understand that we have to build resilience against climate change, our drying climate and the climate that is, indeed, heating and creating that challenge.

I understand that Hon Jim Chown is not going to be moved by that because he is locked into the old paradigm. I note with great interest what Hon Jim Chown said in an interview with Future Directions International. They are very interesting comments. When he was asked about the role of climate change, he said —

I certainly hope that climate change isn't a reality. But it will be the next generation that proves or disproves the idea.

We are not going to take responsibility or do anything: "We'll just leave it to the next generation to sort out our mess." How irresponsible is that? He went on to make this statement —

Whether these facts are attributable to climate change or natural phenomena, I don't know, and I challenge anybody else to say otherwise.

Thousands of scientists of the highest repute from around the world are saying otherwise. They are saying that the things that have changed our climate overwhelmingly are the result of human actions. Whether it is carbon emissions or changes to the landscape, climate change is overwhelmingly attributable to human action. It is completely and utterly irresponsible for anyone to suggest that we leave it to the next generation.

Point of Order

Hon JIM CHOWN: My motion refers to the decisions and policies of the McGowan government in regional Western Australia. The minister is off on a rant about her opinions on climate change. I suggest she gets back to the motion.

Hon Stephen Dawson: Not a point of order.

The PRESIDENT: I will determine whether there is a point of order, but the member is correct on this occasion. There is no point of order. I note particularly, as Hon Jim Chown knows, that his motion is extremely broad and other members have already referenced that particular matter. I am sure that the minister on her feet will reference the motion in front of us but she is using that particular example as others have done in relation to matters that are being dealt with in your region.

Debate Resumed

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I will certainly stand here repeatedly and say that a preparedness to accept and deal with climate change is absolutely fundamental to the future of Western Australia and it is absolutely fundamental to the future of farming, so I do not accept that this is not highly relevant to the issue of how we make opportunities for regional Western Australia. I put it to Hon Jim Chown that having made those statements, he is monumentally unfit to be the Liberal Party shadow minister for agriculture. He does not have that fundamental right. He just wants to do the punt down the road to the next generation. That is one of most completely appalling statements that I have heard.

The member is concerned about animal welfare. I think he once said—one of them asked me a question saying that I had too many women on the —

Hon Jim Chown: I did not say that.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: No, it was not you; I agree. There was a problem with understanding names.

The animal welfare reference group that I established is deliberately not a stakeholder group. It deliberately does not have representatives from WAFarmers, the Pastoralists and Graziers Association and Animals Australia. We wanted people who have broad expertise. Its members have come from a variety of backgrounds but they have come overwhelmingly with strong knowledge of animal practice and animal welfare issues. Their job is not to devise the policy; their job is to sort through all the competing submissions and input from all the stakeholders in the community and try to work out where we can establish common ground. I note that the member did reference the fact that Catherine Marriott is part of the group. Catherine Marriott is a highly respected person who was in fact the chief executive officer of the Kimberley Pilbara Cattlemen's Association and she has gone on to hold a variety of very senior positions. She has deep credibility within the pastoral and farming community. We were very conscious of the need to make sure that although it was not a representative group, it had that range of perspectives. I have to say that when I see those people in operation and hear them having their discussions, it is an incredibly expert group and one that absolutely understands that what we have to do in developing animal welfare is to

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understand that people in the community come from very different directions and, as I said, we have to establish some sort of common ground. Indeed, that is what is happening. This is not about setting up the rules for live export.

Hon Jim Chown: Is the RSPCA a stakeholder or not in your opinion?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: The RSPCA wanted to be represented on the body, but we said, “No, we’re not having representatives on the body. We’re putting together a group of people who we think have got real deep understanding and expertise on these issues.”

On the specific issue of last year voting against inspectors, in the end we agreed to change the animal welfare legislation to allow us for the first time to incorporate the national standards and guidelines that had been signed off in 2012. It does not make a lot of sense if there is no enforcement mechanism, but, anyhow, we have the standard in the legislation and we said—I think a number of colleagues on the other side understood this—that we were going to develop a set of regulations that would work for each of the standards and breaches, and that work is being done. It is taking a long time, but, hopefully, it is being worked through with the industry. We also said that as part of the animal welfare review, which we had already committed to, we would put the whole issue of how we have inspections of those farming systems that are being incorporated into the national standard. There is nothing sneaky about this; it is absolutely what we said we were going to do: “Let us have a look at this as part of an overall animal welfare review.”

The member has gone crazy about where the animals that were mustered from Yandeyarra have gone. He alleges that some of them would have ended up in an abattoir. That is what happens to animals that are raised on cattle stations—they end up in an abattoir. I understand that of those animals that were mustered—not that it is my job to ask people who they sell their cattle to—a little more than half went north to the Kimberley abattoir and just under half were sold, as happens, to various farmers. Some farmers would have taken them and had them grazing on their paddocks and others might have onsold them to an abattoir, but nothing that does not normally happen to an animal on a cattle station happened to those animals after they were mustered.

As I said, quite separate to all the work that we were doing with Yandeyarra to improve the management, our compliance unit was conducting the inquiry into animal welfare. As I explained at the time, it is quite difficult in this circumstance because a lot of the animals appeared to be feral. Part of the thing one has to do in order to establish —

Hon Jim Chown: Somebody was responsible for the death of those animals and you know that.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I will try to explain what is going on. Part of the complexity was that people must be able to show that they have responsibility for that animal and they did not take that responsibility.

Hon Jim Chown interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Adele Farina): Order, members! The minister has the call.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I certainly do not think that the government will prosecute pastoralists because there are dead camels on their property. There has to be some ownership of responsibility.

Hon Jim Chown: That is my point, minister.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: The member’s point is meaningless because he is making allegations about something about which he knows nothing. There has in fact been a detailed investigation. That investigation resulted in a brief being sent to the State Solicitor’s Office. I think that went to the State Solicitor’s Office sometime towards the end of last year and we are waiting now for the response from the State Solicitor’s Office. This has happened. The investigation into Emanuel Exports took well over a year before any charges were laid. I think it takes a long time; nevertheless, this appears to be the process.

I am concerned about what is really going on here and why the member is so fixated on this. Did the member see the footage that has been shown on Israeli TV that has been circulated? No, of course he would not have seen that one. That vision was around some very confronting conduct on pastoral stations in the Kimberley that were not owned by Aboriginal people. However, for a variety of legal reasons, the government will not prosecute those. This has not got to do with being partial or impartial, taking a different view of Aboriginal people compared with non-Aboriginal people, which is the substance, the dog whistle, of the application. However, the government wants to work with those Aboriginal stations, and is working with them, to ensure that they have a proper process in place.

Hon Robin Scott mentioned regional airfares. He would no doubt have been extraordinarily excited by the announcement of Minister Rita Saffioti recently that the government will put \$8 million into a fund to bring down the price of regional airfares. She particularly referenced Kalgoorlie in that process.

Hon Robin Scott: When?

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Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: Two days ago.

Hon Robin Scott: When is it going to come into effect? Another promise.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: They have the allocation now. However, we do not just make an allocation and send out cheques; we have to work out how in fact this is going to work.

Several members interjected.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: “What have the Romans ever done for us?”, he says. His latest beef is that we are encouraging pastoralists to diversify.

Hon Jim Chown interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order, members! The minister has the call.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: Many of the pastoralists the member talks about, who are part of the southern rangelands, are struggling. In some cases, the problem is that they simply do not have sufficient capital or the means to make the necessary changes on their properties. However, so many of those pastoralists are already diversifying in the sense that they work in the mining industry. The member says that those people are angry that we are talking about carbon farming. They came to us; they want to carbon farm. They want the opportunity to restore their lands. They are coming to us.

Hon Robin Scott interjected.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: We are not making them do it, but for the first time we have a government that cares enough about that sector of the pastoral industry to do the two and a half years’ worth of work that had to be done to deliver that, to bring on board the mining companies—the member’s friends, the small miners—to accept and support carbon farming in the pastoral regions. That is a great success. The member’s idea that we just hand out a bit of money here and there and do not deal with the fundamental structures is absolutely ignorant. As I said, the government is very keen to do far more in this area of carbon farming and creating opportunities for those pastoralists and communities on the eastern edge of the green belt to give them an opportunity to diversify their economies and make them more sustainable as we face the inevitable consequence of the climate change that Hon Jim Chown does not accept.

HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West) [2.16 pm]: Thank you, Madam Acting President, for the opportunity to make a few gentle remarks on Hon Jim Chown’s motion before the house today. It is pleasing to see that we are again discussing decisions that affect regional Western Australia. When the government was elected in 2017, I thought we needed to look at the government’s regional policy to see where its direction was and what it was going to do.

Hon Darren West interjected.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I will get back to Hon Darren West. His time is coming. Is he the only farmer in Parliament?

Hon Darren West: The only working farmer.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: He is the only working farmer. So why is he not good enough to be the agriculture minister?

Hon Darren West: Because we have a much better one over here.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: The government has a city slicker as its agriculture minister.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order, members! Hon Dr Steve Thomas has the call.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: It is pretty hard when you have to point out the obvious.

I decided to look at the government’s agenda. It was most obvious in its first budget. I thought the 2017 budget was a great direction-finder on what this state government would do in regional areas. What did we see when we looked at the budget media releases for the south west? We saw that over time governments have traditionally put out portfolio-specific budget statements and regional-specific budget statements. We have traditionally had the *Budget Statements* with all the wonderful things that come from the budget for the south west, for example. Of course, all the general expenditure is in there so governments on both sides of politics claim credit for schools that were going to happen and hospital construction that might or might not have happened—all the things that are part of the normal expenditure. However, the interesting thing about this government’s 2017 budget is that although it had results in other regions, in the south west it was educational, because it had the budget impacts for Bunbury,

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Albany and Collie, but not for the south west. What does that tell us about this government's plan for regional Western Australia? It is entirely electorate-based. This is a government whose regional policy is to prop itself up to win regional seats where it thinks it can. It is absolutely the case. It was obvious in the 2017 budget when it stated where the government planned to go. It said it had three important seats in the south west. It did not have a budget release that said "the region". It had budget releases for seats that it thought it might just hold and it put a lot of money into them. It said, "We have thrown the election commitments in there. Everybody else is missing out because we have picked and chosen our favourites here, and this is the way we are going to present our budget information." I thought that was quite astounding. It just laid open the agenda of the current government. Some of those election commitments were quite interesting, and we can look at a few in detail. I will not start with the obvious one; we will come back to Carnegie. Let us talk more specifically about what happened in Collie. The Minister for Regional Development and I actually agreed, after the nearly two-year campaign, that the biomass plant and the solar farm in Collie were completely dud election commitments and election thought bubbles that should have been scrapped. Eventually, after some time, the minister must have come to the same conclusion because they were scrapped; either that, or Treasury came to that conclusion and took them off the books.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: They were rolled into a bigger fund.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I am coming to that, too. I will spend a bit of time this year on that. This might be the PFAS of 2020—the Collie Futures fund. We will do a bit more on that over time.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: Are you standing for the Collie seat?

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I do not know. Is the minister standing in the South West Region? This is the Machiavellian joy of the Labor Party. Will the Minister for Regional Development jump into South West to save Hon Pierre Yang, who has to shift from South Metropolitan to North Metropolitan? Will that process knife in the back the only South West member who, as far as I am aware, lives in the electorate—Hon Adele Farina? Hon Dr Sally Talbot may laugh; is she the member —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order, members! Members, when I call order, you need to come to order. If you are finding it really difficult to do that, I suggest you leave the chamber.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Members might ask me where I am standing; I will be standing in the South West Region, where every good nominee lives and works in the region and is passionate about it. We are not, in a Machiavellian fashion, pushing someone from a metropolitan region down there and doing a triple shift. I do not know; will Hon Dr Sally Talbot be jumped over for that—the member for the Denmark city boundaries and greater metropolitan region? Is that what we will see? How will that treat regional and rural people when the government is involved in that kind of Machiavellian activity? I would love to hear the outcome of this. Let us see whether that occurs. I never believed that the Minister for Regional Development was going to jump in and stand for the seat of Albany; I always thought that rumour was a bit dodgy, so I will be very keen to see whether, in order to get its ducks lined up for the next election, the Labor Party is willing to shuffle people all around these regions for its own political benefit.

I am a great fan of the Minister for Regional Development; I am sure I am one of her best supporters. I think it must be very difficult to manage the regional development portfolio. Here is a tip for Hon Darren West: if the Minister for Agriculture and Food moves out, I am betting they will not give the job to him. Nobody is that silly. That would be a crisis beyond a drought and a bushfire! It must be very tough for the Minister for Regional Development, and I want to give her some credit. In the first instance, she is not a member of the Expenditure Review Committee of cabinet, which is unusual for a minister who, in theory, manages the billion-dollar royalties for regions fund. I would have thought —

Hon Alanna Clohesy interjected.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I could not hear the question, sorry. I would have thought the minister should have been in the ERC, because then she could have contributed to economic debate at a higher level rather than having to go, cap in hand, to Treasury.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order! Order, members. This is the last warning I will give to those members who are interjecting; I will start ejecting people from the chamber.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: This is important, because this is how we get regional development right. I think it is important that the minister should be part of the ERC. In my view, Treasury now has far too much control over what happens in the regional development portfolio.

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I love a set of budget and agency estimates; I think they are great fun. Towards the end of last year we had some agency estimates with Treasury. The poor old Minister for Environment has to sit through the Treasury one, so my apologies for putting him through that, but I was interested to see how much of the royalties for regions budget in particular—which is not the entirety of regional development, but a significant component—has undergone what I call “trans-subsidisation”; the word might have changed a bit. There is a word for the amount of money that the government has shuffled from the royalties for regions budget into general expenditure to free up money in general expenditure items to put wherever it wants to in the budget. I am calling it trans-subsidisation. The minister might be able to correct me. I understand that the word the government uses has been banned by the Premier and that no-one within the ministry and various departments is allowed to use it, because it is too controversial. According to my back-of-the-envelope calculations, that trans-subsidisation number will be in the region of 72 per cent by the next budget—that is, the amount of money that is being transferred into normal activity. It is an enormous amount of money that hamstrings —

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: You had things like the whole administration of the Department of Regional Development, you had schools, you had a whole heap of things moved.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: There is nearly half of that going out in water subsidies alone. It is absolutely true; the previous government also did some trans-subsidisation, but it would be interesting to know what the word is.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: Honestly, your then Treasurer said that he would have to take certainly over \$1 billion out of that budget in order to —

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: That is right. I will want to know, when the budget papers are laid down in May, the Treasury-estimated extent of trans-subsidisation or whatever the word is that the Premier has banned—the word that shall not be named. I will want to know exactly what that number is in the May state budget—precisely how much of the money from that fund is going into normal operating activity and cross-subsidising government expenditure elsewhere. Treasury could not tell me. We spent some time on this. The Minister for Environment has probably forgotten in the trauma of agency estimates, but there is a page and a half of me trying to get out of Treasury what that figure looks like. I will not table it, because members who are interested can go and look up that particular debate. I even asked Treasury what the word was—if it was trans-subsidisation—and that brought out some smiles. Not from the minister, of course; he was deadly serious, but many of the Treasury officials knew and understood. My version of the nomenclature might not have been accurate, but there are certainly issues around the government’s version of it.

The Minister for Regional Development has a difficult time. I have seen it in this place before. This is the minister for funding dud election commitments.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: How ridiculous.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: The minister is. Every regional election commitment, whether it is good, bad or indifferent, has to be found in the minister’s budget, which curtails her capacity —

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: We set out a list of our regional priorities before the election and we made it very clear in our financial statements that we submitted before that election where the source of funding was, so what is —

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Where was the Collie solar farm coming from—\$30 million? Where was the Collie biomass plant coming from—another \$30 million? Where was the Carnegie money coming from?

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: The whole funding of a just transition is the absolutely right thing for us to do, and I think the member has acknowledged that his team did nothing when it was in government.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: That is hardly what I have said; no.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: We did find when we came to government that we needed to invest that money in Collie, but we didn’t want to limit it to projects of that type. We weren’t excluding those projects; we were just saying that we were going to make it broader so that it could capture other projects.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: The projects were dumped, minister. I agree; the projects were dumped, and that was a good idea. The government has rolled that money into the Collie industry attraction and development fund. On top of that, there is the \$20 million Collie Futures fund. Collie does have issues and it will require investment, and that is why, as a general rule, I have not attacked the process of working through what might be good projects. I will be asking the minister this year how that project is going, because I am a bit interested to know how many jobs it will create. It might surprise members to know that I am a bit sceptical. I am a little concerned that a massive mural at Wellington Dam might not be the big attractor of tourists to Collie that

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people think it might be, because although it is 30 kilometres out of Collie, it is also 30 kilometres out of Dardanup and it will not guarantee that the tourists will go any further than that. What was that? A couple of million dollars has gone into that.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: It is part of a larger concept of making the whole area an attractive tourist destination. You can't look at it just by itself.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: We shall see. The government will be held to account for the money that is expended to make sure that it delivers jobs on the ground rather than more thought-bubble ideas.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan interjected.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: We will see how the \$80 million contributes over the long term.

Just before I move on, the \$2.7 million driverless training facility has some big backers; WesTrac and Caterpillar are involved, which I think is great. However, I am not sure that anybody has quite thought about the anomaly of having a town that is struggling for jobs, particularly mining jobs, as the centre for driverless vehicle training.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: These are the jobs of the twenty-first century.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: We will see how many jobs they get.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order, members! Hon Dr Steve Thomas has the call.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I would be very keen to see how Collie feels about that process, because it is tough in Collie. It is tough in many regions. I note that government members and the Premier have been very regular visitors to some of the regions, particularly in the south west. The Premier has been a regular visitor to Albany, Collie and Bunbury. Gee, they are the same three seats that were a part of the economic program of the Labor Party at the last election! My view is that the Labor Party is concerned about those seats, given its performance. Where is the next regional cabinet meeting going to be held?

Hon Stephen Dawson: It hasn't been established, has it?

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Has it not? The minister has already been invited to it. It is in Albany.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order, members! Hon Dr Steve Thomas has the call.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Thank you, Madam Acting President; it must be an election year!

In a couple of weeks, the Labor cabinet will descend upon Albany, one of the three areas in the south west region that are its strategic investment targets. That reflects the problem of this government. It is focused on the politics of the regions, not on the development of the regions or good and efficient investment in and running of the regional development portfolio.

Although we are having a debate about what is going on in the regions, there is so much that the Labor Party seems to be particularly unaware of. I will be very intrigued to see whether that changes in the next budget, and whether it is entirely focused on the handful of seats that the Labor Party is desperate to cling onto in regional areas or whether there is, as Hon Diane Evers said, a deliberate strategy of development going forward. Not every strategy works. I am the first to say that not every project that a government invests in works. Sometimes for reasons beyond its control, they are just not going to go forward. We call that the Carnegie effect! Outside of that, they do not always work. I get that. We need a strategy for regional development that is for all of regional Western Australia, not just those bits that are politically pertinent.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: Did you see the last round of south west regional economic development grants that we gave that were overwhelmingly not in Labor-held seats?

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Although Labor holds a number of seats in the south west, with the exception of Murray–Wellington, geographically they are small areas—Bunbury, Albany and Mandurah.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order, members! Hon Dr Steve Thomas has the call.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I would expect that if it was being distributed, a large amount would go into other seats of course. That is just doing the basics of the job. The focus of this government is too political and it is not based on the economic development of the regions. The motion before the house today from Hon Jim Chown is

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completely relevant. This house, the house of review, needs to keep a very close eye on how this government proceeds, particularly in the next budget, which I mentioned briefly. It is a bit like PFAS. The 2019 mini iron ore boom continues slightly into the new year. I was interested to see that the price dropped back under \$US90 a tonne in the second week of February, which was effectively a full year after the Treasurer of this state said that a price of \$US90 a tonne for iron ore was extremely unlikely and therefore the government had not even bothered modelling it. It is still sitting at about \$US81 a tonne at the moment, so this government will have a lot of money to throw around in the next state budget. It is the pre-election budget, so we can expect largesse everywhere, and I hope it gets distributed a little more evenly. Money is a bit like manure; if it is all piled up in one area, it starts to stink, but if it is spread out evenly, there is the chance of magnificent growth.

HON COLIN TINCKNELL (South West) [2.37 pm]: I would like to thank the member for bringing this motion to the house. It refers to this house expressing its concerns regarding the McGowan government's policies and decisions affecting regional Western Australia. I would say that the confidence of regional Western Australians in this government is at an all-time low, and that is borne out by many things. I could talk about the dairy industry, the egg industry or the live export industry and there would not be a lot of confidence in this government showing leadership in those areas. If we look at the cuts that it has made in the last two years, we see that, in real terms, up to \$40 million has been cut from the agriculture sector. That is massive. Regional Western Australia is feeling the cuts. There has been a failure to address drug addiction, particularly to ice, in regional WA. There has also been a decrease in real terms in regional road funding. I have talked about this previously in Parliament. Wheatbelt roads are the most dangerous roads in Australia and are some of the worst and most dangerous roads in the world, and that is because of the lack of funding for road maintenance. We have also seen a fall in community-driven natural resource management funding. We have seen the declining state of the roads and we have seen a failure to act on crime. We have seen the government's poor attempts early in its term of government with regard to education. We already know that accessing health services in regional Western Australia is not as good as it should be. The list goes on and on. I refer to the fall in TAFE funding in real terms. Rationalisation is not working at the moment. Funding cuts have occurred everywhere and it is not working very well for regional Western Australia.

I have brought motions to this house about red tape. A very wide discussion has taken place about red tape in all areas of this state. I understand the reluctance of government to take on the issue of red tape. However, agriculture and mining are two of the biggest export and revenue earners in this state, which virtually exclusively are in regional areas. I do not believe the issue of red tape in these areas is being dealt with. It has been put in the too-hard basket. It is hard, but anything that is hard is worthwhile doing. It is part of the business. We have heard that 14 government members are in regional seats in both the upper and lower houses. I imagine the numbers will be cut after the next election due to lack of effort and policy failures in these areas.

I also mention that comments have come from lots of people about tier 3 rail, which could possibly be financially viable and of some use, although perhaps it will not. Unfortunately, it does not seem to be on any government's radar at the moment, and that is disappointing. No doubt using it would help the road situation, but it would also help make transport in this state much more efficient and in the end much more cost effective.

Look at the lack of confidence that must be coming now from the live export industry, the egg industry and the dairy industry. They are areas that need some leadership from this government. I know there is no magic wand and we cannot solve every problem, but this government could show leadership and broker a deal for the dairy industry and possibly the egg industry regardless of what is happening in other states, even though at this stage, their farmers have a better deal than the farmers of WA have. That is needed now. Lack of confidence that some help may be coming from this government could cost us one of the greatest industries in the south west and other areas of Western Australia—the dairy industry.

Western Australia is well known for mining and the amount of revenue it earns. However, as we have found with the coronavirus, putting all our eggs in one basket does not work. Agriculture, which keeps on delivering good results for the state in difficult circumstances, is sometimes given a raw deal. I do not believe we work hard enough or show leadership at a government level to take it to the next stage. We knew there would be a downturn in mining but we did not get our act together to give agriculture the emphasis and push that was needed. It has been held back and in some ways it has declined. That is due to a lack of confidence in this government's commitment to work with different industries to get a good result.

I mentioned before where I think the government has let itself down in regional areas. At the moment, fisheries in southern WA waters are struggling a bit due to poor legislative drafting over the last few years. Many areas need to be picked up and helped. That is what I would like to focus on and leave this message with the house; that is, give regional people confidence that this government gives a damn and will make a difference and help them through difficult situations. That is lacking. Regional people in WA lack confidence in this government to get a good result for regional WA.

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HON DARREN WEST (Agricultural — Parliamentary Secretary) [2.44 pm]: I will be brief because Hon Colin Holt wants to make some comments. I hope that someone from the coalition will talk some sense on this motion that this house expresses its concerns regarding the McGowan government's policies and decisions that are affecting regional Western Australia. I thank the honourable member for bringing it on because I am a very positive person and I am very positive about regional Western Australia. It is quite depressing to hear members from the other side talk it down and talk about the doom and gloom that is perceived to be out there. That is not the case. There has never been a better time to be in agriculture and in regional Western Australia.

For the people of regional Western Australia, things are looking up. Agriculture is going well and mining is going well; fishing has its challenges but, generally speaking, we are doing well in the regions because we are getting great leadership from the McGowan Labor government. I remind members that at the last election we took a plan to fix the state's economy and get people back to work—a very clear plan for regional Western Australia—to the people of Western Australia. They overwhelmingly supported us and, consequently, Labor has 13 regional MPs—more than any other party. Nine Nationals were elected; seven Liberals were elected and five were elected between everyone else. I see that as an overwhelming endorsement of the policies that we took to the last election and we are delivering on those policies. There is a saying in politics that the voters never get it wrong. In 2017, they did not get it wrong. They voted with their feet and voted for us. We have been very proactive in the regions. We have a fabulous regional development and agriculture minister, one of the key drivers in the government to deliver on this ambitious plan we have for the regions.

We were elected with a clear plan for jobs and clear commitment for the regions to grow and to diversify the economy. That word “jobs” is why we lost an electorate from the regions to the city under the last government. People do not stay in the regions unless there is work. We are providing jobs in the regions and getting on with getting people back to working and living in the regions.

We have committed to a \$4.2 billion royalties for regions fund across regional WA. More than \$5.6 billion will be invested in regional infrastructure over the next four years and \$2 billion of that will be spent on regional roads. For the first time, we have a government committed to doing something about the backlog of maintenance and upgrades required on regional roads. We are trying to get the federal government to release some money from that crazy defunct metropolitan Roe 8 project and put it into regional roads. We have a nine-year plan and we have put our \$180 million on the table. I urge members opposite to contact their local federal member and get them to sign up to the state government's \$900 million plan that will create jobs, fix our regional roads and address the issues raised by Hon Colin Tincknell about the unsatisfactory road fatality rates in regional Western Australia. I encourage all members opposite, rather than talking us down, to get in touch with their local federal coalition MP to get them on board with this project that we need to get on with, because a lot of jobs are involved in building roads and it is a good time to get roads built. We are on that one. We are funding some regional roads, including the Bunbury–Yalgorup highway, the Albany ring-road, the entire length of the Karratha–Tom Price road, the Tanami road and the Coolgardie–Esperance highway. They are all being upgraded under Labor after waiting decades.

Remember; we inherited a budget basket case and we have turned it around from excruciating losses to now looking at operating surpluses. We are doing all this work in the regions while fixing the budget. It does not have to be an either-or. That is what members opposite fail to understand and will never understand. We will invest \$2.7 billion over the forward estimates on water, wastewater and drainage projects, with around \$900 million of that in regional Western Australia. That is a significant investment by the McGowan government in public services in regional Western Australia.

We delivered on our 2017 election commitment to boost local content in state government jobs and contracts. A good case in point is Geraldton Health Campus. We have broken that much-needed \$73 million project into about a dozen smaller projects so that we can encourage local businesses to contract for and, more importantly, win that work. We would hope that that project would be almost entirely built by people from the Geraldton area—by locals. That never happened under the last government. Only 16 per cent of royalties for regions funding tenders were awarded to regional businesses. That is nowhere near acceptable, and we are working on that.

We have put significant funding—an extra \$131.5 million—back into the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development to rebuild the department, which was decimated under the previous mismanagement of the Barnett Liberal–National government. We have committed \$45 million in the forward estimates for grains research and development. We are partnering with the Grains Research and Development Corporation to win a fairer share of our GRDC levies from Western Australia, which are significant, to get research done in Western Australia. This was like another GST that was allowed to go on unabated by the previous government. Western Australian growers were putting in almost one-third of the levies but were getting from the GRDC only about one-sixth of the return. We are still working on that. The main projects that we are working on with the GRDC are re-engineering soils to improve water and nutrient flow to crops; increasing farming system profitability and the longevity of benefits

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following soil amelioration; increasing grower profitability on soils in the eastern wheatbelt with sodicity or transient salinity; optimising yields and expanding the area of high-value pulses in Western Australia, such as lentils, faba beans and chickpeas; evaluating milling oat varieties and optimising profitability from early-sown oats; and expanding the sowing window for canola and lupins.

As a farmer, I know that these things are needed badly to help increase our profitability and efficiency. We are looking at carbon farming. We have made the landmark decision to allow pastoralists to earn carbon credits from sequestering carbon on pastoral lands. For some reason, the Liberal Party seems to have a problem with this. If pastoralists see that as their best way of generating income and profit from their pastoral lease, so be it—they can knock themselves out—so long as that can be managed in a sustainable way. It is a very exciting opportunity for Western Australia that we have so much uncleared land that we can use to sequester carbon back into the soil. While our federal government is being dragged kicking and screaming, the rest of the world is moving in this direction. We will be ready to take advantage of that.

In 2019 we announced the pastoral lands reform package to drive sustainable development and better land management across the pastoral estate. I understand that about 91 per cent of Western Australia is crown land, and much of that is pastoral estate. This suite of measures will enhance monitoring and compliance, and improve security of tenure, along with encouraging development and diversification of the pastoral estate. “Diversification” is the key word. There is nothing to stop pastoralists from continuing to do what they have always done. However, let us be innovative and work out new ways in which we can generate the best possible outcomes from the pastoral estate.

I have a list of many, many things. One of the things that I am proudest of is the midwest Aboriginal shearing training camp. The Minister for Regional Development went to the graduation to see the final result. There were nine graduates. Nine Aboriginal kids from around Geraldton have learnt how to shear and be a shedhand. They have all found jobs as a result of that camp. We will continue to move on with that.

Last Friday, we had the settlement of the Southern Yamatji native title claim. I am very, very proud of that. That is a great outcome for the Southern Yamatji nation and people around Geraldton and the midwest. Minister Wyatt described that as one of his best days on the job. This claim has been talked about since 1996. In two years, Minister Wyatt has been able to deliver on the recognition of that claim, and also put in place, together with that, an Indigenous land use agreement. That is the first time in history that has been done.

We have a WA renewable hydrogen strategy. The rest of the world is transitioning to a low emissions future, and we want to be part of that. The maturity of key hydrogen technologies, the falling cost of renewable energy and the need to address climate change has seen governments and businesses around the world invest in low and zero emissions industries and technologies. The midwest of Western Australia is the perfect place for such an industry. It has vast amounts of wind and sunlight. We can be one of the best renewable energy production places in the world. Why would we not be in on that—and we are. We have a minister who is committed and dedicated to doing that.

We have invested \$7 million in driving better digital connectivity for agricultural and pastoral businesses in regional Western Australia. The number one issue in my office—I live in the regions and have an office there—is connectivity. We are working on that.

The Collie economic development has been touched on.

We are delivering for regional Western Australians in spades. The people of regional Western Australia will make a decision on our performance in just over a year. I do not get a lot of anger, grumpiness and complaints from regional Western Australians about what the McGowan government is doing in regional Western Australia—and they would tell us. We have had issues and a difference of opinion with communities, and we have sorted out those issues. They are long behind us. We have listened. We have learnt. We understand the regions. We have a great team of country Labor members of Parliament. I am very proud to be part of a government that is finally, after all these years, doing things for regional Western Australia.

Point of Order

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Madam Acting President, I draw your attention to standing order 59. I observed Hon Darren West’s speech quite intently, and I noticed that he quoted extensively from a document. I ask that he identify the document and that the document be tabled.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Adele Farina): Member, would you please identify the document?

Hon DARREN WEST: Certainly, Madam Acting President. The document is an aide-mémoire that I have prepared for myself, for my speech.

Several members interjected.

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The ACTING PRESIDENT: The member has requested, as part of the point of order, that you table the document. Standing order 59(2) states —

At the conclusion of a speech in which a Member has quoted from a document, the document shall be tabled upon the request of any other Member, unless the Member states the document is a confidential document.

You have not stated that it is a confidential document. Is that your statement?

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: On that point of order, can I just query, please?

The ACTING PRESIDENT: We do not normally engage in debate on a point of order, but I will hear what the minister has to say.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I am sorry, I have not looked at the standing order, but it is my understanding that if these notes were in fact prepared by the member themselves to assist them during the debate, I did not understand that that was the type of document that was covered by that standing order.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Excuse me, members! Minister, I have just read out the standing order, and it does not fit in with your version of its interpretation. It states very clearly —

At the conclusion of a speech in which a Member has quoted from a document, the document shall be tabled upon the request of any other Member, unless the Member states the document is a confidential document.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: It is a question of it being quoted from, rather than it being his own document.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Members! This is not helping. Hon Darren West, you have informed us of the document that you have quoted from. The issue now is: is the document a confidential document?

Hon DARREN WEST: Madam Acting President, I am a little unsure about what to do here. I have prepared this document myself, so I would have thought that it was my information, so, yes, confidential, but I would be open to advice.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order, members! It is my understanding that as the member has stated that the document is confidential, the member does not need to table the document.

Debate Resumed

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Members, the question is that the motion be agreed to. I give the call to Hon Colin Holt. However, I also point out to Hon Colin Holt temporary standing order 6(1), which requires me to interrupt him five minutes before the conclusion of time.

HON COLIN HOLT (South West) [2.59 pm]: I want to go back to the motion, which refers to the “government’s policies and decisions affecting regional Western Australia”. My assessment is that this is all about the impact of the government’s choices and priorities on regional Western Australia. I know that the government has a viewpoint on that, but I also have a viewpoint on that and it probably conflicts with what the government believes. There is no doubt that this government is metro-focused and the cornerstone of its policies at the last election was Metronet. At the time of the election that commitment was \$4 billion, but it has certainly grown since then. With every passing year and with every kilometre laid, that is growing. I am not sure whether the government has pegged how much it will cost, but Hon Rick Mazza quoted \$40 million per kilometre of Metronet rail. That is the government’s priority and choice, but it has to pay for that somehow. At the same time, it has made choices about what spending goes into regional Western Australia. Hon Dr Steve Thomas quoted some cost-shift trans-subsidisation figures, which we have also been trying to get a handle on to figure out what that means. Perhaps the estimates of 72 per cent or \$72 million a year is pretty close.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: That is my estimation.

Hon COLIN HOLT: I would say that it is probably \$600 million a year, \$300 million of which is in the country water pricing subsidy. If we take that amount of money out of royalties for regions, which is a regional development fund, obviously it will have an impact on what happens in regional Western Australia. I agree with many members that regional Western Australians—in fact, all Western Australians—are very resilient and independent. Some of that is due to our political isolation from Canberra, which is wrapped up in eastern states politics and populations. The same could be said for regional Western Australians who miss out because of metro-centric Parliaments.

Extract from *Hansard*
[COUNCIL — Wednesday, 12 February 2020]
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I continually hear that the Labor Party has more country members than any other party, but do they stand by the cost-shift trans-subsidisation that takes money out of a regional development funds to prop up Metronet? That is a major question that remains unanswered. Those members have stood by and allowed that to go through the cabinet process without a whimper.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Member, I apologise. Under temporary standing order 6(1), I am required to give the mover of the motion an opportunity for a right of reply.

HON JIM CHOWN (Agricultural) [3.02 pm] — in reply: What have we learnt today in the debate on this motion about regional Western Australia? The first thing I learnt is that if you run cattle, look after them, feed them, water them, breed them, sell them, put them on a truck and take the money but they do not have a brand, they are feral cattle and you are not responsible for anything that happens to them. I find the minister's interpretation of that quite astounding. It is in *Hansard*; read it. Another thing we found out today is that Hon Darren West has peaked in his political career—a most interesting revelation. We also found out today that the McGowan government had no idea that a tranche of money that it received from the commonwealth to help drought-stricken farmers and pastoralists to desilt their dams and to put down new bores was available for only 12 months, and that when the government did not utilise it and ask for applications, and put processes in place, the commonwealth took the money back. That is what we found out today. That is right, we have a department that now has over 90 vacancies. Maybe that is why it did not understand what was required here.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: Wrong department. You're getting your departments confused.

Hon JIM CHOWN: The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, then—the Minister for Water —

Hon Alannah MacTiernan interjected.

Hon JIM CHOWN: I beg your pardon, minister?

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: You're getting your departments confused.

Hon JIM CHOWN: It is the same government. You all sit around the cabinet table.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: No, you're saying it's a department that has got vacancies.

Hon JIM CHOWN: I do admit to that mistake; I am getting carried away with myself.

Everybody's contribution today has had some relevance, but what I am very happy about, and what everybody here should be quite happy about, is that Hon Diane Evers has hit the nail on the head. We have spent two hours today discussing issues about regional Western Australia and regional Western Australians. For the last two hours they have been mentioned in a debate in the Legislative Council and from a whole different perspective, a regional and party perspective, and I am happy to get the support of her party's members on this motion. I am also extremely happy that regional Western Australia has been on the agenda of this Parliament for the last two hours.

Division

Question put and a division taken, the Acting President (Hon Adele Farina) casting her vote with the noes, with the following result —

Ayes (21)

Hon Martin Aldridge	Hon Colin de Grussa	Hon Simon O'Brien	Hon Colin Tincknell
Hon Jacqui Boydell	Hon Diane Evers	Hon Robin Scott	Hon Alison Xamon
Hon Robin Chapple	Hon Nick Goiran	Hon Tjorn Sibma	Hon Ken Baston (<i>Teller</i>)
Hon Jim Chown	Hon Colin Holt	Hon Charles Smith	
Hon Tim Clifford	Hon Rick Mazza	Hon Aaron Stonehouse	
Hon Peter Collier	Hon Michael Mischin	Hon Dr Steve Thomas	

Noes (12)

Hon Alanna Clohesy	Hon Adele Farina	Hon Kyle McGinn	Hon Dr Sally Talbot
Hon Stephen Dawson	Hon Laurie Graham	Hon Martin Pritchard	Hon Darren West
Hon Sue Ellery	Hon Alannah MacTiernan	Hon Samantha Rowe	Hon Pierre Yang (<i>Teller</i>)

Pair

Hon Donna Faragher

Hon Matthew Swinbourn

Question thus passed.

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Hon James Chown; Hon Robin Scott; Hon Rick Mazza; Hon Diane Evers; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; President;
Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Colin Tincknell; Hon Darren West; Hon Martin Aldridge; Acting President; Hon
Colin Holt

Point of Order

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: I respect that you made a ruling earlier on a point of order that I made, Madam Acting President, but subsequent to your ruling I observed Hon Darren West provide a document to Hansard. I understand that the document he provided was the document he was quoting from. I ask you to consider this matter and confer with the President and the Clerk as you require so I can understand whether the status of that document's confidentiality has changed since the member has released it to Hansard.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Adele Farina): Members, in view of the point of order made by Hon Martin Aldridge and his request that I confer with the President because the member is challenging my earlier ruling, I will leave the chair until the ringing of the bells to confer with the President, and I expect Madam President to return with the ruling.

Sitting suspended from 3.11 to 3.24 pm

The PRESIDENT: Members, I understand that a point of order was moved by Hon Martin Aldridge. I advise you that once question time has been completed, I will provide a response to that point of order.