

**McGOWAN GOVERNMENT — PERFORMANCE**

*Motion*

**MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** [4.04 pm]: On behalf of the Leader of the Opposition, I move —

That this house condemns the Treasurer and the Labor government for delivering a budget that abandons our local communities while failing to rectify the ongoing health, housing and skills challenges plaguing our state.

It is my intention to speak today about some of the issues that I see in my electorate that have not been addressed. Several members interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Members, if you want to have a conversation, take it outside.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Thank you.

It is my intention to talk today about some of the issues that affect regional Western Australia and my electorate in particular as a result of the failure of the current government to address many of these issues. This is especially the case given that the government is sitting on a large surplus of \$5.6 billion. That money could be applied to rectify many issues that are yet to be cured in the electorate of Moore and elsewhere. It is because of the failure of this government to deliver for those local communities that we are forced to speak today.

As we know, we have heard a tranche of announcements throughout the last few weeks about programs that have been put forward by the government. The budget is probably the most heralded budget in the sense that many of the programs were out in the public arena before the budget was dropped. I think most people had a fair idea of what was in the budget before it was released.

In my own electorate of Moore, I have to start by talking about the most seriously impacted area in the electorate after the recent events of tropical cyclone Seroja that smashed through much of the electorate. The town of Kalbarri was within the electorate of Moore until March when the electoral boundary change meant that it moved into the North West Central electorate. The people in that electorate were fortunate that their local member, the member for North West Central, was in Kalbarri immediately after the cyclone and personally spent many, many days and weeks, I believe, working hard to assist the community of Kalbarri. He was on the ground and doing the hard yards by helping with the clean-up. Well done to him. That is a great example of what a regional representative can achieve when they actually work for their community.

As I said, tropical cyclone Seroja did not stop at Kalbarri. It smashed through Northampton and affected the Shires of Chapman Valley, Mingenew, Carnamah, Coorow, Three Springs, Perenjori, Morawa, Dalwallinu, into the central wheatbelt and through the City of Greater Geraldton. I represent most of the geographic area of the City of Greater Geraldton. There was a tremendous amount of damage. As we know, there is an ongoing need in those areas. The event was declared a catastrophe for insurance purposes, but I am hearing on the ground that many of those claims still have not been resolved five months on from the disaster. People are displaced, anxious and facing financial uncertainty. They are financially stressed and cannot simply get on with their lives. We need to see mental health outreach provided and people touched by the services of government to enable the recovery program to proceed. I am pleased that the state government, along with the federal government, injected a large amount of money into the cyclone recovery effort. I put on the record that that has been a very important investment by the government. It is good to see that some action is being taken there, but, as the local member, I will, of course, monitor the situation to ensure that the program is being rolled out well and that the people are getting the help they need to get over the impact of the cyclone.

The Western Power network was severely affected throughout that whole area. Fortunately, the government's plans to close and sell the Mungarra power station did not go ahead, because that power station was able to be deployed. Enough of the network was put back on so that the City of Greater Geraldton at least had some power relatively quickly after the cyclone—a few days in. Power to other communities that are connected to Geraldton via the grid, such as Dongara, came on about a week later. That was very good, but other areas were without power for many weeks, if not months. That is a stark example of the fragility of the Western Power network in the midwest, which is an issue that I have raised for pretty well the entire period that I have been a member of Parliament. It is a very vulnerable and frail network. It is good to see that standalone power is being brought in for some farming areas as that will be a big help, but many communities need their power to be reinforced, with town site power also very much at risk. We need more local generation and more microgrid systems or standalone backup generators.

That followed in the aftermath of cyclone Seroja. I pay tribute to the many very hardworking volunteers who have been involved in helping others throughout this period, the staff of various government agencies who have assisted and also the local governments that have come to the fore in those areas and shown how important local government

Mr Shane Love; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Simon Millman;  
Mrs Jessica Stojkowski

---

is at that level in connecting to the community. I am referring to the Shires of Northampton, Morawa, Perenjori and others—I do not want to single any out because I may leave some out, but I have mentioned all the local governments in previous debates. A great deal of work has been done by many of their CEOs, councillors and staff in assisting their communities. I give my thanks to all the local governments in the midwest area that have been involved.

That being said, many issues remain in the electorate, with one being coastal erosion. We know that coastal erosion hotspots exist up and down the state. It is good to see that the government has taken on board some of the Nationals' plan to properly fund action on coastal erosion around the state, but of course not with the amount of resources that we would have devoted to that cause in regional areas. It is important that local governments and local communities have somewhere to go to seek funding, so a fund has been established. There are dire threats and immediate issues from coastal erosion that need to be considered in places like Lancelin—for instance, an emergency services building is under threat. It is a situation that the local shire cannot manage on its own. As a local member, in the first term of government I was successful in arguing the case, with assistance from Hon Terry Redman and his office, to get funding for the Seabird seawall, which has protected the town of Seabird. Further protection is needed in coastal areas in my electorate, and considerably more investment is needed than we are seeing at the moment, notwithstanding the investments announced in the budget.

In terms of the health spend, I note that the budget documents outline some cost overruns in certain programs and that they are being addressed by trimming funding from other areas and projects. I am a bit concerned about what some of those other projects might be. I cannot find specific information anywhere in the budget documents about the development of the Mullewa health centre, which is an issue that I have raised many times in this place. There is funding for the primary health centres demonstration initiative, which is the program that it was being funded under, but there is no specific allocation or detailed information about that particular health centre. I am a bit worried about the line in the budget documents that says that funding is being repurposed away from certain projects to pick up cost overruns in others. Mullewa is very much in need of that expenditure. It is a matter I have raised directly with the Premier. I am looking forward to seeing something other than a sign appearing at Mullewa.

I raised a recent grievance in this place about the deplorable situation with the Jurien Bay marina. There was an excellent opportunity in this budget, with its \$5.6 billion surplus, for the Jurien Bay marina to gain funding from the state government. That marina is an environmental disaster. It is an ongoing issue. It is good that the Minister for Environment is in the chamber to listen to this debate, because I have outlined this situation to the Minister for Transport and she is aware of the issues. As the Minister for Environment will know, the marina is an enclave of the Jurien Bay Marine Park. Every year in Jurien Bay, the many hectares of the marina become a fish-kill site. Effectively, it is like dragging a huge net the size of the marina through the ocean and pulling fish out of the marine park and dropping them onto the beach and letting them rot. If the operations of a commercial trawler or someone else actually led to the killing of that quantity of marine life, there would be an outcry. I imagine that someone would get a jail sentence. The state government's asset is effectively acting as a fish trap. It has led to the entrapment of fish at least once a year over many years. The marine life goes into the harbour and then the mouth of the harbour becomes toxic because of a build-up of hydrogen sulphide from decaying weeds. This puts a cork on the harbour and no animals can leave. Slowly, the poison spreads throughout the harbour and kills everything. It is a brutal thing to see. It is distressing. It certainly should not be allowed to continue. The government has a large amount of money. This project has been designed after many years of study. A study group was put in place in about 2015 to look at developing the long-term information needed to formulate a fix to the marina. A report was released in July last year by the Department of Transport. This project needs funding. When I raised this with the minister, she said that she would be looking for federal funding. I think it is more urgent than that. The federal government has already given huge amounts of money to the state government in infrastructure grants. Given the current election environment, I do not want the marina to again be treated as a political football. It needs to be fixed. There is an opportunity, a plan, a design and a costing—I got information back from the minister from a question on notice I asked last year, and we asked another question in the other place this year. We know what is needed to fix it, and it should just be fixed. It is one of those assets that needs to be addressed quickly.

Similarly, in terms of marine environments, Port Gregory is a very small community at the far end of my electorate, south of Kalbarri, that has a jetty that has been landlocked for the best part of eight or nine years. The Department of Transport has refused to look at fixing this situation, either by dredging, putting in place some sort of protection or extending the jetty. Some consideration needs to be given to that. Port Gregory has a great little natural harbour out of which commercial boats operate. It would be great to see some money spent there to enable the Port Gregory jetty to be functional. Port Gregory is one of those places, along with two or three other small towns in my electorate, where, especially in the coastal environment, it is very hard to get mobile, radio and other signals to travel across the limestone and sand country; it degrades the signal very quickly. In places like Port Gregory and Ledge Point, to name a couple, there are large mobile towers located not far from the towns; however, there is virtually no signal in those towns because the layout is such that the town is over the hill, behind a sand dune or a limestone ridge, and the radio and mobile signals do not travel to it. I would have thought that that would be a pretty simple fix,

Mr Shane Love; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Simon Millman;  
Mrs Jessica Stojkovski

---

and I have raised this before. We could put a small tower inside the town to receive the signal from the larger tower and beam it around the town. That would be quite inexpensive and would solve the problem in towns like Port Gregory and Ledge Point.

Another issue in the Lancelin and Ledge Point area is the lime route heading out from Lancelin. Hundreds of thousands of tonnes of lime sand is mined at Lancelin each year and is then exported across the wheatbelt to cure acidity in wheatbelt soils. That is a very important program for the productivity of the wheatbelt. At the moment, the condition of the lime routes is constraining some of those trucks from being able to get through in a safe manner. Work has been done on those routes and I applaud that work. That was often done with the aid of the federal government, and I acknowledge the support of the Liberal–National federal coalition government and the many grants that it has provided for road and other infrastructure throughout regional Western Australia, which have supported the oftentimes more modest expenditure of the state government in those projects. A lot of these projects are funded 80 per cent by the federal government and 20 per cent by the state, so when the government claims that there is a \$200 million program for roads et cetera, we have to look more carefully at the underlying figures to see who is funding that. Quite often, we see that it is the federal Liberal–National government that is helping to fund the majority of these important projects.

One project I will highlight is the Cowalla Road Bridge over Moore River. It is a single-lane bridge on which drivers have to stop and give way to each other. That was probably okay back in the day, but now that this is a principal route for the exportation of hundreds of thousands of tonnes of lime sand, it is time that that bridge was addressed. Another bottleneck, if you like, that needs to be addressed very quickly is the situation at Northampton. A bypass is needed around that town. That project has been under discussion for decades and there have been multiple requests over the years for it to be prioritised. The situation is now more urgent, with Strandline Resources on track to truck 230 000 tonnes of mineral sand through the town in addition to all the other traffic that comes along the North West Coastal Highway. All the big gear that runs up the North West Coastal Highway to the west Pilbara is going smack bang through the centre of this historic village. It is a huge safety problem. It needs to be addressed as quickly as we possibly can. I am disappointed to see that there is nothing in the budget for that project and very little consideration of that whole midwest area and its needs for infrastructure. I will talk a bit more about some of those needs, because they touch on some other portfolios that I have, in my budget-in-reply speech.

I know that the Leader of the Liberal Party has raised the issue of Oakajee and electricity transmission through the midwest. Of course, Oakajee is in my electorate. It is very important to the future of employment in the midwest to have a more efficient port structure and an industrial area that is well-supported and can develop into the future. We know that there are exciting projects throughout the region for the development of renewable energy and the development and use of natural gas. All those projects depend on a bit of assistance from the government to not only help coordinate these things, but also be cooperative when the industries come calling and say that they need help to get infrastructure in place so that they can develop these projects and the rest of the area.

There are some tremendous projects that are looking to get off the ground in the area. I know of one by Strike Energy that is based in the area between Mingenew, Three Springs and Dongara. That company has a gas well there and is hoping to use that gas in the development of a urea industry, which will involve the replacement of imported fertilisers right through the wheatbelt of Western Australia. It will have a very positive impact on the carbon footprint of Western Australian farms, because a much lower amount of carbon will be needed to get a tonne of its fertiliser onto the ground in Western Australia than is needed to import the same product from China. At the moment, we know that the creation of urea is quite a dirty industry in some places. Strike Energy has an exciting project to do that in a much more carbon-friendly way, which has the potential to produce an exciting industry for the midwest and many benefits for the farms in the area.

There are many other issues that I could talk about, but I know that others wish to speak on this. I think that the Leader of the Liberal Party is standing by, ready to go.

**Dr D.J. Honey:** Champing at the bit!

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** At this point, I will conclude my discussions and allow him to outline some of his concerns about the failure of this government to actually take into account the needs of many of the communities of Western Australia.

**DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe — Leader of the Liberal Party)** [4.26 pm]: I rise to make a small contribution to this debate this evening. Firstly, I will focus on issues in my own electorate of Cottesloe. I think it is fair to say that when it comes to this budget, one could be forgiven for thinking that the electorate of Cottesloe does not exist at all. There is nothing of substance in this budget that will directly benefit the people of Cottesloe. There are some serious issues in my electorate, but I will just touch on an area of general concern that relates peripherally to the budget, which is the announcement by the Minister for Planning that she is considering extending the so-called COVID emergency planning powers and making those the norm. That is certainly of enormous concern to the people who live in my electorate. Despite enormous concern in the local community and an overwhelming number of submissions opposing a development that goes outside the local structure plan, the special panel that was put together

Mr Shane Love; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Simon Millman;  
Mrs Jessica Stojkovski

---

to review the proposal for 120 Marine Parade has approved it. The panel did not even go back for consultation on that because there had been consultation on previously rejected proposals.

**Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski:** It has been consulting for three months!

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** It did not consult anyone on the proposal that it approved—no-one. It said that it did not have to. This goes completely outside the local structure plan, which does in fact allow high-rise development along the foreshore at designated places. That plan was widely consulted with the community. In fact, there was broad concern about the heights that were adopted, but, at the time, the community accepted the proposition that there needed to be reasonable infill but said that it needed to be done in a way that did not destroy the character of the beachfront and suburb. That area is not just used by the people of Cottesloe. It is the most popular beach in metropolitan Perth and is used by people from right across the state. In fact, as someone who attends that beach quite regularly, I know that it is an iconic tourist beach that attracts people from all over the world. Unabated high-rise development will destroy the character of that area and have an effect on the beach.

The justification that the minister gave for extending those powers was no longer that we needed emergency stimulation of the economy, which was the original justification for taking away the rights of communities, but that it would encourage economic activity to make up for the economic activity that was going to disappear because of COVID. We know, in fact, that because this state was largely unaffected by the COVID-19 pandemic, there was no dip in economic activity; in fact, the return of expatriates from overseas gave a boost to the economy. We now see an enormous pump priming of the residential construction and apartment markets to the extent that people are being told that their houses will not be constructed for two or three years. It is a tragedy for young people paying rent and a mortgage on a block of land. Nevertheless, all of a sudden we are told that there is an argument that we need a pipeline of projects for the future. This is just a nonsense. It is a complete surrender to developers who are frustrated that they have to engage with local communities. Most reputable developers do not mind that engagement process, but some are frustrated. Can I say that developers were overwhelmingly donors to the Labor Party at the last state election and have been a considerable source of funds for Labor's elections. It seems now that the minister is simply currying favour with those developers to continue enjoying their support. Every member here should be concerned about this because those emergency powers essentially remove any input from the community. Now the agreed structure plan for an area is meaningless—it has no meaning. It will be simply up to a room of hand-picked people to choose what happens in their suburb.

Regarding other issues in my area, the beachfront redevelopment is a major issue. Cottesloe council is a small council and has only 8 000 residents; Mosman Park and Nedlands have about the same number. Claremont has about the same number but is increasing. It means they do not have the capacity to do the major works that larger councils such as Joondalup, Stirling and Wanneroo can do. Those councils can undertake very well thought out major development activity, but Cottesloe council and the other councils along the coast in my electorate do not have that opportunity. I think there is a need for a coordinated approach to development. There is also a need for government money to assist that.

Another area that is of really great concern to me personally and members of the electorate is level crossings. I congratulated the Minister for Transport in her role on the excellent work that is being done on public shared pathways. I have certainly welcomed that; I certainly championed it. The government has delivered on extending public shared pathways. The Victoria Street, North Fremantle section of those pathways will shortly be complete. I was interested to hear that the government has an extensive program of grade separation between the PSPs and road crossings and level crossings out to Armadale on the Armadale line and also on the Midland line, but not one single project to get grade separation on the Fremantle line. I am genuinely concerned. I have raised this matter in this place before. The PSPs are excellent. Cyclists get up a real head of steam on them. The fitter riders do 30 or 40 kilometres an hour. They ride along in the zone and my real concern is that there will be a serious injury or fatality at the crossings. Any member who goes to my electorate will know that there are limited opportunities to get from west to east, from the beach side through to the hinterland and through to Stirling Highway. The level crossings are quite chaotic in the morning. In fact, people take real risks because given the train frequency and the lights on Stirling Highway, it is very hard for people to get across. Car drivers are not looking for cyclists when they cross and I am very concerned that, as I say, there could be an accident caused by that. I know there are near misses; I have seen them myself.

**Mr R.H. Cook:** You're getting major expansion of the PSPs in your electorate.

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** As I said, minister, I am very grateful for that and I have personally congratulated the minister for that. It is a continuing program with excellent support from the government. It is the level crossings where the roads cross the PSP and the railway line. It would be good to see in future budgets some focus on the Fremantle line for that grade separation continuing down the line. As I say, I genuinely believe it is a safety issue. I appreciate the minister's good intent on this but it would be good to see the work being done on the Midland and Armadale lines extended to the Fremantle line as well.

Mr Shane Love; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Simon Millman;  
Mrs Jessica Stojkovski

---

I will go on to some broader issues, but one issue that affects my electorate in particular is housing. Since the election, as I have said in here a few times—people are probably bored with me saying it—I have made a real effort to get out to communities right across the state from north to south and all points in between. I can honestly say that in every single community I have visited, certainly every one of the significant communities and many in between—whether it is Esperance, Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing, Broome and even down south to Albany, Mt Barker, Denmark and through to Kalgoorlie—the lack of housing has been a major issue. I would like to focus on two aspects to housing. Obviously, one is social housing. We have voiced our concerns in this house about the lack of social housing. It is a simple reality that this government has overseen a bit over a 1 300 reduction in the number of social housing places. We heard of an \$800 million announcement by the government before Christmas about a plan to tackle social housing, and there has been very limited progress on that. Another \$800 million-plus commitment has been made in this budget and I certainly have a concern that that will not deal with the problem. That is the issue of homelessness and I will talk about that a little more in a few minutes.

The area that is really substantially holding back economic development right across regional Western Australia is the absence of rental accommodation. I have seen nothing in this budget that will do anything about that rental accommodation crisis. I appreciate that this is not a trivial problem. I appreciate that to get rental housing we have to do something different but there is nothing different in this budget to encourage rental accommodation. Why is rental accommodation so important? It is important because for people to attract workers to a town, the workers have to have somewhere to live. Members will have seen that the vacancy rates in pretty well every significant regional community is close to zero. There are areas where, essentially, rental houses turn over in two or three days. Workers going into a community do not want to buy a house. Typically, if they go into an area that is unfamiliar to them, they want to rent. Once they have rented for a period and have become established in the community, they may buy or build a house, but initially they need to rent. I saw a direct example of a significant hotel chain in Albany that was struggling to get chefs. Again, in every regional area and even in the metropolitan area businesses are struggling to get chefs due to the restrictions on people coming from overseas. The hotel in Albany got a chef to come over from Queensland. He spent three days trying to find rental accommodation in Albany, but could not find any. He then went to South Australia because there is a nationwide shortage of chefs. In fact, we contacted a catering business in my own electorate the other day about providing a catering service, but it said that it was shutting up business because it could not get staff. It is a small business and will be shutting up because it cannot get staff to work in its catering business. People might say that is not a major problem in the metropolitan area, but in regional communities it really is a major problem. Those communities cannot get workers and cannot expand their economies because of the lack of workers. The lack of accommodation is the root cause of the inability to get workers in the area. I was talking to a number of company representatives at the Diggers and Dealers Mining Forum a little earlier this year. I was talking to a significant drilling contractor in that town and that drilling contractor said that the only thing that is preventing them from expanding their business is a lack of workers, and strongly linked to that is the lack of accommodation for people moving to the town. Yes, our economy is doing well at the moment and the price of iron ore is up, but a lot of businesses are being held up because there is no rental accommodation, and nothing in this budget has dealt with that.

I move to homelessness, because I am sure it causes everyone in this place distress. In the budget, we see essentially a commitment to build 2 000 more houses. The previous Liberal government had committed to 6 000 additional houses, but that program has just been reduced and cut. Members will know the outcome of that. There is obviously distress for people who cannot move into more permanent accommodation. There is a sharp edge to it, particularly for people doing it tough and having difficulties. About half the number of people seeking social housing support have very significant medical health issues. It is essentially impossible for those people to get accommodation in a competitive market. They depend on social housing to meet their housing needs, and 2 000 houses will not do it. People have challenged me and asked whether I would like more social housing in my community. Done properly, social housing is not disruptive to communities. There is a very large amount of social housing in my electorate. About 3.4 per cent of the people who live in my electorate live in social housing, particularly in the southern part of Mosman Park. A lot of that stock is old and run down. There is no intensity to it. It is old bungalow-style accommodation. It is not accommodation that many people would want to go to. There is a cycle here in that the lower the quality of accommodation, the fewer people want to move into it, so then people who do move into it may have more issues with antisocial behaviour and that spirals down. I have spoken to a number of developers about this. There are some very good people in the development community who are very passionate in this space. That stock could be redeveloped and more housing could be provided in those areas in my electorate. There would be better social outcomes. It would reduce antisocial behaviour. It would be a win-win if that was done. I have spoken personally to the minister about this. It is something I strongly encourage, but, again, I did not see anything in the budget about that. I think that renewal of social housing stock is really critical.

I have looked at the figures for social housing, and even for emergency accommodation. There was a facility at 100 Hampton Road contracted for 20 individuals for just six months, and that has now lapsed. There was another

Mr Shane Love; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Simon Millman;  
Mrs Jessica Stojkovski

---

contract for just 20 people for a year. Then, there is the former Wellington Street Youth Hostel Association site, now known as Boorloo Bidee Mia. It was meant to house 100 people, but I understand it only has a fraction of that number at the moment, although I am happy to be educated on that. It really seems that there is not an adequate focus or action in this area. I know there is intent. I know the responsible ministers on the other side are not careless about this issue, I know they care about it, but we are not seeing effective action to deal with it, and it has to be a focus.

I will move to law and order. Law and order is one of those issues that has sort of gone under the radar. We heard that there was concern about domestic violence increasing because of the COVID epidemic and people perhaps being forced to live with someone they do not want to live with, or someone who is violent or abusive. There was an initial drop in domestic violence, but after a while it increased in the COVID period. We have seen a significant increase in domestic violence, and obviously the government has programs to try to respond to and deal with that. Just as a quick addendum to that issue, the absence of housing alternatives is exacerbating the problem. Women—in the great majority of cases it is women—are being forced to live with someone who is abusive because they have nowhere else to go. Housing issues directly relate to that. If we exclude domestic violence statistics—they are not excluded because the issue is not important; it is a critically important issue for me, the community and, I know, the ministers—violent crime against individuals is the worst it has ever been in the history of this state. There is effectively nothing in this budget to deal with that. If we look at the supposed increase in support, there is a very, very small increase in funding for the police, and then it goes down. Looking at the supposed numbers of police coming into the system, I cannot see how they are going to be provided with uniforms and protective equipment, because the budget simply does not allow it. Unless there is a magic pot of money, law and order will be a major issue facing this community.

**MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party)** [4.46 pm]: I also rise to speak to this motion that the house condemns the Treasurer and the Labor government for delivering a budget that abandons our local communities, while failing to rectify the ongoing health, housing and skills challenges plaguing our state. Like other members in this corner of the house, I rise to speak specifically to concerns in the electorate of Vasse. Although significant concerns were raised about this budget, which I will also raise, I want to put some positives on the record about what has been committed to and outlined for the electorate of Vasse in this year's budget. There is the expansion of and an additional \$10.9 million for the Royal Flying Doctor Service and increased accommodation subsidies under the patient assisted travel scheme, which is something we supported and advocated for. The \$9.5 million for the underwater observatory is something I also advocated for as the local member. It is a very good investment. There is an investment to redevelop classrooms into science, technology, engineering and mathematics classrooms at Busselton Senior High School and Cape Naturaliste College, as well as some general funding for additional school psychologists, which is obviously a very worthy investment.

Despite our state being in a very fortunate position, once again the electorate of Vasse has largely been ignored by the McGowan government, particularly in the critical areas of health, mental health and housing. We have heard much about what was first the \$4 billion headline and then the \$1.9 billion headline about the apparent investment in health in this budget, but on the ground we have seen something much more moderate. There will be a two per cent cut in operational expenditure in 2022–23, which will impact regional hospitals already under pressure. The Australian Medical Association of WA expects that demand for health services will continue to increase by over three per cent per annum. Across the state, but particularly in the regions, we are seeing that our hospitals are struggling to cope. The McGowan government has failed to make health a priority for the last four years and it is now realising that this underinvestment has led to a health system that is quite obviously in crisis. General maintenance work that was identified by the WA Country Health Service has been left for three years at Margaret River Hospital. It impacts the ability to provide the necessary health services in our regions and support for that community. The pressures we are seeing in our emergency departments are right across the board, which is impacting workplace environments as well. There is no clearer example of that than at Bunbury Hospital. There is a WorkSafe improvement notice at Bunbury Hospital after five months of investigation into what has been described as a toxic workplace culture. Bunbury's hospital director, Jeff Calver, said —

... pressure on the hospital and the state's health system in general had contributed to the issues.

They are the words of the hospital director himself about the pressure we are seeing as a result of the lack of investment and planning in our health system.

As I stated, these issues are right across the state, reflected also in the latest Your Voice in Health survey, which found that less than half the respondents—some 47 per cent—actually felt their organisation cared about their health and wellbeing or felt they were valued in the workplace.

Busselton Health Campus is feeling the impact as well. After years of campaigning with community stakeholders, it has a psychiatric liaison nurse who is now struggling to cope with the number of mental health presentations that we are seeing from a range of different age groups. This points to the issues we have had with mental health funding.

Mr Shane Love; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Simon Millman;  
Mrs Jessica Stojkovski

---

Regarding the psychiatric liaison nurse, questions in Parliament revealed she had seen 454 patients in her very first year of operation, 85 of whom were under 18 years of age. They are extraordinary figures given that we are looking at the number of young people presenting to that very small emergency department. Key mental health stakeholders have overwhelming concerns regarding the obvious gap in support for what has been described as the missing middle—the early intervention support—as well as crisis support. The PLN is managing more than one referral a day, raising the question of how many more are slipping under the radar without the necessary support services available. The overwhelming feedback is about that gap on the ground. There has been an investment in that one person at Busselton Hospital, but the real issue is about what support there is in the community. What investment has there been in the community to ensure that we do not see so many of our young people present to emergency departments because they feel there is nowhere else to go? The Youth Advisory Council of Western Australia has commented on the underfunding in this area. In response to the budget, YACWA stated —

Unfortunately, investment continues to focus on costly crisis-based services and bed-based supports. Too often young people are unable to access supports early in the community and must become severely unwell before they receive the help they need.

This was reflected in a grievance that I presented earlier this year. We are hearing from parents who talk about the fact that sometimes their children are not sick enough to be able to get any level of support at emergency departments, which seems to be the only answer for many in the community. The scale of investment in prevention and community support is not growing at the necessary rate relative to hospital investments to change the trajectory and pattern of need being expressed, translating to pressure on our acute services. The fact that there is not enough investment in early intervention is obviously having, and will exponentially continue to have, an impact on our emergency departments and other health areas.

*The Better Choices. Better Lives: Western Australian mental health, alcohol and other drug service plan 2015–2025* had bipartisan support and I imagine, as a plan, continues to have support. It shows that mental health prevention and community supports are the most under-resourced parts of the mental health system. Unfortunately, this budget again fails to deliver on this. The optimal mix is that by 2025, six per cent of the mental health budget should be on prevention. This year, only 1.15 per cent is on prevention, which is well below the five per cent target that is in place for 2025 and also below the four per cent target that was meant to have been achieved last year. It represents a very slight increase from the 0.9 per cent allocation from last year's budget, but is still way off track compared with the proposed targets. This does impact our emergency departments and this lack of investment in early intervention for mental health support contributes to the revolving door of hospitalisations and what health workers are talking about being a tsunami of presentations. This is in not just our regional hospitals but also Perth Children's Hospital.

The Minister for Mental Health came down to provide a glimmer of hope to some stakeholders in the community. I was very grateful that Minister Dawson took the time to come down. He provided a glimmer of hope for many stakeholders. I will single out Jon Eddy as being very passionate after his own personal experiences centred around the tragic loss of his son, Alex. He attended a meeting with the minister and Jon voiced the region's concerns regarding the Bunbury-centric services failing to penetrate the wider south west community. I quote Jon Eddy —

More hours and more staff must be allocated, there must be more support given to schools and staff on the ground to deal with this crisis. The whole approach to mental health education at schools seems to be fragmented and uncoordinated. We must consolidate our approach to mental health education to achieve real results.

Mr Eddy said many of the services on offer were underfunded, at risk of collapse and Federal supports such as headspace struggled to retain workers.

Sadly, there has been a number of youth suicides in the electorate and more support is desperately needed for our youth. Since the election of the McGowan government in 2017, we have seen cruel cuts to valuable mental health support including to the Lamp Inc program, which provided an important service in supporting the homeless to achieve independent living. We also saw cruel cuts to community organisation GP down south, which provided valuable support in our local schools for our children to learn resilience and achieve better mental health outcomes. It is very disappointing that, following grievances and questions raised in this place, and following eight reviews and much advocacy on behalf of the sector, our children and youth in the capes region of the Vasse electorate are left wanting.

What we also know about early intervention support is that it can change lives. I urge the government, and I will continue in this place to urge the government, to reconsider its approach to mental health prevention and, in particular, how it will support people's mental health in the future.

In relation to housing, although this government has made a commitment for 2 000 new homes, the member for Cottesloe and Leader of the Liberal Party pointed to the commitment of the former Liberal government for 6 000 social housing properties. He also talked about the importance of supporting the vulnerable. Since this

Mr Shane Love; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Simon Millman;  
Mrs Jessica Stojkowski

---

government has come to office, it has sold off 1 300 social housing properties. That loss to the state housing system over the past four years has meant that about 17 000 people are now on the public housing waitlist. That number has increased since the moratorium on rental evictions ended in March.

The city of Busselton in my electorate is at crisis point. The residential vacancy rate is effectively zero. Of great concern is the number of unoccupied state-owned homes in Busselton that are in need of repair. Those homes have the capacity to support families, but have not received the maintenance that they require. In July, there were 27 unoccupied homes in Busselton. I have touched on the cuts to the provision of independent housing for support groups in 2017 when the McGowan government first came to office. Priority must be given to maintenance funding to ensure that current stock that is sitting empty is made available as a matter of urgency, together with the necessary support services for our vulnerable.

A local constituent in the city of Busselton contacted me to highlight her experience. She states—I am reading from my notes —

*I just wanted to make you aware of how terrible the housing crisis is in the south west at the moment. I had an ordinary house for rent for \$500 a week in Cowaramup last Monday; within 3 days I had around fifty enquires and 10 offers to rent unseen. They were long term local families as well as people calling from over east.*

*Nearly all of those people who applied had children and all the local people said they would be homeless if they didn't get the house. I know from anecdotal talk, it was true. There was nothing wrong with the applicants I followed up on; they had jobs and perfectly good rental histories. They worked in local businesses and had children at local schools. It was so distressing to have to tell so many people they didn't get the house, several cried—this is an absolute crisis. The pressure was added by people calling from Sydney offering me hundreds more than I asked for rent (which I did not take) ...*

[Member's time extended.]

**Ms L. METTAM:** It continues —

*The impact of this is terrible disruption and disadvantage for families and young people; the local economy and communities.*

*There is a desperate need for immediate, secure affordable housing in our community and the long health and economic term effects on people will be significant if it is not urgently addressed ...*

It goes on.

The housing crisis is also having an impact on our small businesses. That is feeding into the skills shortage. We are well aware of that, and it has been articulated by other members in this place as well. The housing shortage is having an impact on the ability of hospitality and tourism venues and farmers to attract workers, because workers cannot find a place to live. As a consequence, many small businesses have to restrict their opening hours. A popular business in Busselton, Burger Bones, has made the difficult decision to close during the September school holidays, simply because it is unable to obtain staff. This is a major issue. There is no support for tourism operators who are doing it tough. I will read a quote from the Burger Bones business, as reported on the website busseltonmail.com.au. It states —

*While the school holidays will be one of the busiest trade times of the year, the fallout from COVID-19 has seen many businesses in the tourist town struggling to hire staff limiting their ability to trade.*

*Burger Bones owner Cooper said while their situation wasn't unique, losing a key staff member in the current economic climate forced them to make the call.*

*"It is the nature of our (WA's) bubble," he said.*

*"Our chef, who we loved, had an opportunity to go up north and earn big bucks, so when we lost him we put out a call, ads and nothing.*

*"Everybody I know in the industry is facing the same problem, we are not a one-off, everybody is in the same boat.*

*"It is devastating ...*

This is not just an issue for our hospitality venues and tourism businesses. As has been raised in this place, it is obviously also an issue for our agricultural sector. That is why it was so disappointing to hear the Premier's comments just last week when these issues were raised. I am not sure whether the Premier was unaware of or just does not care about the opportunities lost in not taking up the commonwealth's offer to support additional seasonal workers from overseas at the quarantine facility in the Northern Territory.



Mr Shane Love; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Simon Millman;  
Mrs Jessica Stojkovski

---

In my electorate, infrastructure for sporting facilities continues to be an area of high demand. I appreciate that this is an area that local governments must largely prioritise. Sporting facilities are certainly under pressure in our growing region. We now have 257 basketball teams, 47 more than last season, and they have just four competition courts on which to play. This year, they will have to look at imposing a bye simply because they do not have the space to cater for this growing population. That needs to be prioritised. I appreciate that, importantly, it needs to be prioritised at the local level by the local government. I would also like to see that backed up by a strong commitment from the McGowan government by investing in these sporting facilities. That fits in with mental health issues. It is concerning to hear that people may be turned away from playing a sport that they love, or are interested in and potentially may be engaged in, because there is not enough court space. That is simply unacceptable.

Turning now to education, I have touched on the fact that I welcome the STEM funding for classrooms at Busselton Senior High School and Cape Naturaliste College. We also have some outstanding needs for our primary schools. Cowaramup is one of the fastest growing areas in my electorate. Cowaramup Primary School was built in 1923. The school still has no permanent early childhood education facilities; instead, it has four transportable classrooms. Dunsborough Primary School is the only school in my district that does not have an enclosed undercover area. That is a safety hazard. The canteen is no longer fit for purpose and does not meet local health standards. During the election, the government pledged just \$25 000 for that school, leaving a balance of \$875 000 needed to address some of these issues. The P&C has resorted to asking parents for a levy to pay for the gap.

We welcome the funding for school psychologists, but we would like to know where they will be, and some more specifics. What we are hearing from our child health nurses is that they are no longer providing only band-aids and fixing grazes; they are dealing with some pretty heavy and distressing concerns and challenges raised by our students as well.

Of course, in the area of tourism—I have touched on this—we welcome the investment in, and commitment to fund, the Underwater Observatory. This will back up the federal government's commitment of some time ago. It is concerning that a \$9.5 million commitment has been made at the expense of something else—that is, at the expense of the funding that was set aside for the Busselton Margaret River Airport terminal. It is concerning that significant investment in one thing comes at the expense of something else. I imagine, given the strong demand for fly-in fly-out flights from Busselton to the north, which will only continue to expand, Busselton airport will be in significant need of further investment. Given that the government has made every effort to cut corners on this important project, it is disappointing. The Busselton airport expansion project is a visionary project and was designed to cater for interstate flights going forward. It is disappointing that the government has tried to compromise that project since 2017. The former Minister for Tourism called the project a “pup”. The Minister for Regional Development looked at ways “to unpick the project”. Now we see that the government is ripping funds out of the terminal as well. Although I welcome the investment and commitment to support federal government funding for the Busselton Underwater Observatory project, I raise again why it needs to come at the cost of something else, particularly given that the two are interrelated. It is anticipated that a large underwater observatory will create a lot of interstate tourism interest and, hopefully, facilitate the way for interstate tourists to come to Busselton when it is safe to do so.

That is just a snapshot of the issues and concerns regarding my electorate. I am yet to give my contribution to the budget debate in my portfolio areas, but the budget has missed the opportunity to invest in one of the fastest growing regions in the state. This government is turning its back on some of our most vulnerable, and it is of great concern that the government is effectively turning its back on the youth of Busselton, Dunsborough, Yallingup and Cowaramup, and those in the capes region as well.

**MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe)** [5.13 pm]: I also rise to take this opportunity to support the very good motion moved by the member for Moore that this house condemns the Treasurer and Labor government for delivering a budget that abandons our communities while failing to rectify the ongoing health, housing and skills challenges that plague our state. I look forward to briefly talking about some of the issues that have affected my communities.

As the member for Vasse said, we need to give credit where it is due. There are some good points in this budget. We do not want to be too negative, but there are certainly some things that we want to point out as well. What I want is equity in the regions in health, education, housing, telecommunications and industries like forestry. To be honest, as a member of the opposition, the last few days have been depressing after seeing what this government is doing with its climate package of \$750-odd million. The government's announcement that came out of nowhere will wipe out many communities that have been rebuilding so well for so long—the likes of Manjimup and Nannup. I am sure that the member for Warren–Blackwood is not enjoying it too much. She probably knows that her political future, unfortunately, will not be longer than three and a half years due to the fact that this government will basically wipe out the timber industry in her electorate. The government does not understand that land is needed to plant hundreds of thousands of trees. If the government expects that people will stump up farmland to plant softwood trees that might appear in 30 years' time, I am sorry, it is sadly mistaken.

Mr Shane Love; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Simon Millman;  
Mrs Jessica Stojkovski

---

There was a fantastic article in *The West Australian* today by Jenna Clarke. She made plain what the issues are in the likes of Manjimup, explained what happened previously and how this sucks the morale out of communities. We have heard from the shire presidents of Manjimup, Nannup and other communities express their discontent. They are the sorts of things that this government has done in its budget. But at the same time, and running parallel to that, it has thrown in this electoral reform scenario, which, as I said today, I still cannot believe has been the first order of business for this government when there are so many other pressing issues. The Minister for Health is working overtime because he has a health crisis on his hands. He also holds the portfolio of state development, jobs and trade and is responsible for Asian engagement. Asian communities are calling out for interaction with the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade. They look forward to the time when he can focus his attention away from health and on to other portfolios that are important for our state.

I still recall that when I first came in here in 2017 the Premier and Minister for Tourism would keep going on and on about how we needed to engage with China, India, Korea and the like. That was the theme every day; every day we heard about that. The government got rid of the portfolio of Asian engagement; it does not seem to feature very much now. I have heard from various people in those communities who are distraught about the lack of engagement with this government. I look forward to seeing some improvements made in that area. But, as I said, it is also about equity, health and education.

The Leader of the Opposition's budget reply, which was delivered yesterday, was interesting. She drew a lot of parallels to Labor governments of the early 2000s. What did we have then? We had a health crisis and a housing crisis. Lo and behold, electoral reform was also thrown in and they got rid of as many regional MPs as they could to try to centralise everything.

We always hear the Premier say, "You are trying to create a city versus regions divide." He and the Attorney General are doing a fantastic job to create a city versus regions divide, because electoral reform is exactly what we will be talking about when we take the wind out of the sails of regional constituents and regional members in the Legislative Council. They are out there working.

**Mr J.N. Carey:** Do you agree with Hon Steve Martin's office in West Perth?

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** That was a Department of the Premier and Cabinet thing. I believe that that will change. My understanding is that he will be taking his office into the regions.

**Mr J.N. Carey:** Do you support his office in West Perth? Answer the question.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I will come back to the member later. He certainly gave me a hard time yesterday in question time, but I will take that on the chin.

I want to take the opportunity while the Minister for Health is in the chamber to congratulate him on some aspects of the budget.

**Mr R.H. Cook:** Now you've got my attention!

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** It is important to recognise, especially the mental health side of it. That is a real focus. The minister identified it, as we all have, I think. I am really worried about that side of it with our schoolchildren, schoolteachers, health staff and the community in general. We have been fortunate in this state as far as lockdowns are concerned. I believe that we will see mental health issues rise in the eastern states. I am sure that most of the criminal activities that are happening out there at the moment are due to mental health issues. I heard on the radio this morning about Craig and his wife who were bashed unconscious at a train station by a group of youths, and the police—I would have said "unfortunately"—gave them a caution. The police are now relooking at that because it is the sort of thing that the community is starting to get pretty upset about. Certainly, I hope justice is done in that case.

I recognise what the Minister for Health is attempting to do. Others have said that this is a mess of the minister's own making. Maybe I will not be quite that harsh, but I think there was a little complacency over the last four and a half years. As I have said previously, funnily enough, the journalists did not identify that we had a health crisis on our hands until 14 March this year, the day after the election. I know that the Minister for Health is working overtime. He has had nurses and doctors on strike and many people from the Australian Medical Association and other places have come out strongly with their opinions about how to fix the health system. A couple of things that have brought this into focus for me include the case a few months ago when, rather unbelievably, fathers of newborn babies were allowed to be in the birthing suite but could not go down one floor to the ward where their wife and baby were. Somehow that was not okay. Some of the things that we have seen are rather bizarre. Unfortunately, we saw over the weekend that the three maternity hospitals had to direct people who had twins, and other patients, to other hospitals. Ambulances are being diverted from our regional hospitals because they do not have a doctor on call or there is a lack of staff. They are the types of issues in our regions that are affecting my constituents. One of the real concerns about elective surgeries is that a few months ago around 29 000 people were waiting for elective surgeries. I believe the figure is closer to 37 000 or something like that at the moment. The Minister for Health could probably

Mr Shane Love; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Simon Millman;  
Mrs Jessica Stojkowski

---

correct me on that. I know that there certainly are a number of health issues in the elective surgery space that are starting to create issues for my constituents.

Another thing that I have heard anecdotally is that our graduate doctors are now carefully considering whether they would take the next step in their careers in the WA health system, because it seems to be low on their agenda. They are worried about the working conditions and what is in front of them in the WA health system. I know examples of people who are looking at going to the Northern Territory and the like. We have spent the last few years training them in WA and it is a real shame that we are seeing them heading out the door into other fields. As I said, I also want to express my concern, as I did today, about our remote Indigenous communities. We certainly need to focus on strategies to vaccinate them. I know the minister is putting in place some serious efforts, and I think that is important. There are stories about religious fanatics and the like out there. This is a real target for the WA health system. Hopefully, that issue is being addressed.

Another area I want to focus on is labour shortages. We saw last week the Minister for Agriculture and Food throwing her hands up in the air and saying, “We can’t work it out.” We have a \$7 billion crop out there. I cannot tell members how many hours of overtime my staff and I have put in to respond to the farmers out there. They have workers in New Zealand, Victoria, Queensland and the like who are ready to come over, but this government cannot seem to find a way for them to do that. The farmers have quarantine places on their farms and there have been all sorts of windows of opportunities. They did that last harvest, but we cannot seem to do it this harvest. We have a \$7 billion crop out there. As I said last week, our farmers are feeling like second-class citizens. That is a real challenge. We have a massive crop out there. The federal government made Bladin Village available, so we had that opportunity. This government just needed to work through the issues, provide a quarantine solution and employ those people. The minister said it would cost \$20 million. The government seems to have just delivered a budget with a \$5.6 billion surplus. Aside from that, we also have \$2.4 billion in dividends from our government trading enterprises that have been held back because I think this government was too embarrassed to add that to the surplus and end up with an \$8 billion surplus.

The government has held the dividends back. Let us bring them into the mix next year. Including the Water Corporation and the like, the dividends will bring in \$400 million or \$500 million next year, and that might boost things when we need it. The government has a \$5.6 billion surplus, and potentially an \$8 billion surplus, according to my calculations, but the government cannot find \$20 million. That was the minister’s calculation. I reckon it would be \$5 million, \$6 million or \$8 million at the most. We cannot find that money to help the farmers in this state get their crop off. Time has nearly run out. As regional electorate staff and members, we are trying to help out our electorate, but we are really struggling. The ag minister is very wrapped up in carbon, hydrogen, climate change and regenerative ag. They are all commendable things, but right now the focus should be on getting the crop off. That is the number one priority. We can worry about the carbon footprint and those types of things after the harvest is in the silo. Once again, I urge the Minister for Agriculture and Food to have a good look at it and try to make sure that she gets her priorities right. Funnily enough, October, November and December every year is when we harvest our grain crop. As the member for Cottesloe knows—coming from Cranbrook, he is one of my constituents—every year we harvest our grain crop in October, November and December. I will tell members what: this year I think it will go through to January and February because, unfortunately, the ag minister cannot seem to find any workers to get out there and help. As I said, many of those farmers had those workers in during the COVID-19 situation last year. They have the solutions; they have cottages out the back of Grass Patch, Salmon Gums, Cranbrook, Gnowangerup, Kojonup and everywhere else. They are ringing me up and asking me to help them. They want to know what they can do. There is that side of it.

I have spoken about housing many times. There is the \$875 million package, but I am really concerned about Government Regional Officers’ Housing for those people working in education. We are struggling to get relief teachers. Schools in small communities like Nyabing and Cranbrook try to bring in a principal, deputy principal or teacher and they either end up living in a caravan or local motel or they do not even come to the community. Another issue is that principals and others are being selected who do not necessarily fit in with those communities. Housing is a real key to that. I know that the Minister for Housing has made a start on the social housing side of it, but I would like him to focus on the other side, which is GROH.

On the subject of mental health, the State School Teachers’ Union of WA has done many surveys and has identified that departmental staff and students are needing more and more resources in that space. The DETECT report that came out in the last year contained those numbers. That is a real issue that I think is coming up. It is similar to my worry about graduate doctors, as 25 per cent of our graduate teachers are leaving the sector by their fifth year. I believe that we are in front of an impending crisis in the education sector as well. The health crisis has already arrived. When the Minister for Health was in opposition back in 2016, he signalled that the situation in health was not good enough and that the level of ambulance ramping was no good. Ambulance ramping is now 530 per cent worse than it was when he complained about it in opposition! I believe that we have an impending crisis in the

Mr Shane Love; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Simon Millman;  
Mrs Jessica Stojkovski

---

education sector as well, because 25 per cent of our graduate teachers are leaving the profession within five years of starting their teaching careers. I did not see anything in the budget to address that. That is a real worry for me.

I am glad that the school bus inquiry is happening. The minister said that it will be within budget parameters, so that does concern me. Nonetheless, it is a positive.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I want to mention royalties for regions. The Premier said today that royalties for regions is still there. It is still there, in \$2 billion of cross-subsidisation of water and electricity charges, along with \$463 million for orange school buses. Royalties for regions was meant to be expenditure over and above the normal state budget to revitalise our regional communities. Unfortunately, this government has seen fit to use royalties for regions as a slush fund to cross-subsidise things that should come out of consolidated spending, such as water and electricity subsidies, funding for orange school buses and the like.

**Mr R.H. Cook:** You used it on buildings in the city, if I remember correctly.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** We used it to revitalise our regional economies. I know the member for Bunbury was a very good advocate for the south west region; he was certainly right in there amongst it! We revitalised all those economies, from one end of the state to the other. There were nine development commissions that all worked autonomously and obviously wanted the best for their regions. The royalties for regions program put money into every electorate. It did not matter whether it was a Labor electorate such as the Kimberley or the Pilbara, money was put out there. It was about equity; it was about what was best for that region. Unfortunately, we are really struggling to find too much in the state budget for some of our inland electorates—the electorates that are not on the coastal strip. I did see that \$14.8 million will be spent on cladding one of our iron ore sheds in the port of Esperance. That was pretty well the big feature in the electorate of Roe. It was on maintenance.

**Dr D.J. Honey:** It might be for the homeless, perhaps.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** Yes. A maintenance issue for the port of Esperance gets thrown in there as the big item for the electorate of Roe. From my perspective, that is disappointing.

The Minister for Housing was not in the chamber earlier when I congratulated him for his work on social housing. I would like to see a real focus on things like maintenance and getting those boarded-up houses back on track, because we have some big waiting lists in places like Narrogin and Esperance.

**Mr J.N. Carey:** But do you acknowledge that because of the state that some of those houses were left in by tenants, there is an opportunity cost between bringing them back into the system or saying it is too much?

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I acknowledge that. I assume that people who leave houses in that state are put at the bottom of the waiting list. It is not good enough to trash a house and leave it and then ask for the next one. That is not good enough. I assume that the Minister for Housing will be all over that stuff and will make sure that people who trash houses cannot expect to walk straight into another one. I said when the minister was out of the chamber that Government Regional Officers' Housing for police, teachers and the like is a real focus for me and regional communities. This is a real opportunity for the next phase of funding, after social housing, to really focus on GROH and get good-quality employees out into the regions. I will leave it at that for the moment.

**MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Minister for Health) [5.37 pm]:** I want to reflect on the interjection from the member for Landsdale about the vibe, because we have not heard a coherent argument throughout the entire hour and 35 minutes that this motion has been debated so far. With the chamber's indulgence, I will refer to the motion as a way of perhaps guiding the debate, in complete contrast to what was undertaken by those on the other side. I want to speak briefly, because a number of people want to speak tonight.

Firstly, in relation to housing, because of the housing stimulus packages that the government put in place, we now have building approvals for 27 000 homes in Western Australia. That is going to have a significant impact on housing right across this state. The Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre predicts that 10 000 private rentals will come onto the market in the next 12 to 18 months. That will have a significant impact not only in the metropolitan area, but also right across the state as the stock available across the system expands. The Minister for Housing has an extensive program ready to go to expand our social housing package. The McGowan government will invest \$2.1 billion into social housing over the next four years, including \$870 million in new funds as part of the 2021–22 budget. Around 3 300 social houses will be funded. We are holding more than \$520 million to build new social housing homes from 2022–23. To give members an idea of what that will look like in the regions, they will see a record investment in social housing that will include funding to deliver 275 new homes by as early as mid-2022–23. They will also see \$80 million to deliver 150 new modular homes, which will be an immediate injection into the regional housing stock, and \$10 million for the spot purchase of 25 established homes. Through the careful guidance of the minister, we are seeing not only a long-term program to make sure that we build more sustainability in social housing, but also an immediate injection of funds to ensure that we get a refurbishment of existing stock, an injection of 150 modular

Mr Shane Love; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Simon Millman;  
Mrs Jessica Stojkovski

---

homes and the spot purchase of 25 homes, which will have an immediate impact on the social housing stock. Significant work is going on in not only metropolitan but also regional Western Australia.

One thing that was not touched upon by the other side but that featured in its motion was the issue of skills in Western Australia. That is obviously a key aspect of our economy, which is straining at the bit at the moment because of the strong economic growth that we see in Western Australia—economic growth that is second only to China, if we took Western Australia as a sovereign nation, and sometimes we do—so it is not surprising that we are seeing pressures of skills and labour shortages. Of course, that is compounded by the COVID-19 situation. We have seen the McGowan government take some serious steps in relation to a skills strategy, including more than 130 government and industry leaders coming together at the skills summit in July, which was a resoundingly successful day.

We are also undertaking a really deliberate exercise to send the right signals to young people and mature members of the labour market to tell them to get their skills going and build up their skills and capabilities so that they can take advantage of the great opportunities that our economic conditions present. We have slashed vocational education and training course fees by up to 72 per cent for 180 priority and in-demand courses. Leading up to the election, of course, we backed our commitment to TAFE by extending the fee-reduced courses and our fees freeze, pushing that out to 2025. We are sending a clear message to young people and those people looking to refresh their skills in Western Australia that this is the time to build their skills and their capacities so that they can participate in the great diversification of Western Australia's economy, making sure that we are making stuff in WA with Western Australians who are skilled and ready to go.

What has been the impact of that work? We have seen that enrolments in lower-fee courses are now up 27 per cent across all TAFE colleges. Across the board, there have been more than 78 000 students participating in publicly funded vocational education and training in Western Australia, and that is up almost 25 per cent on the 62 800 students recorded at the same time last year. Huge efforts are going into continuing to reskill Western Australians and build our labour base.

We have also undertaken a review of skills training and workforce development in Western Australia, which formed the basis of our \$229.2 million rebuilding of TAFE's plan, the largest single investment in TAFE in the state's history. We see a significant amount of investment to make sure that we continue to grow jobs for Western Australians into the future. Of course, we do not see this significant increase in the number of apprenticeships and traineeships only in the capital city. In regional Western Australia, we have seen a 24 per cent increase in the number of apprenticeships. That is a huge opportunity for Western Australians. In addition, there is a 41 per cent increase in the number of available traineeships, engaging young people right throughout the community. It is not surprising that we are seeing such a low level of unemployment in Western Australia. People are getting jobs that are available today, people are training in apprenticeships and traineeships to make sure that they can secure the jobs of the future, and we are creating those jobs of the future through strategic investments, particularly those undertaken by the Minister for Housing.

I turn briefly to the issues around health. We saw the opposition roam far and wide across the health policy landscape, but the member for Moore opened the batting with a significant pitch for issues in regional Western Australia. I will finalise my comments, because others wish to speak, on key investments in the 2021–22 budget in health in regional Western Australia. Those include \$1.8 million to employ a permanent GP to conduct cervical cancer screening and other women's primary health services at the Goldfields Women's Health Care Centre, \$2.2 million to establish a women's community health service in the Peel region, \$4.4 million to the WA Country Health Service to cover the shortfall in services in multipurpose sites, \$4.2 million to fund the operating costs of an adult public dental clinic at Narrogin Hospital, \$2.8 million to expand women's and communities' health services in the Kimberley, \$2 million for the WA Country Health Service to continue the regional renal support teams, \$2 million to undertake detailed planning and scoping of works for stage 2 of the redevelopment of Geraldton Health Campus, and \$785 000 for a 12-month women and newborn health service pilot program to be delivered by Karratha's Women's Place Inc.

Of course, this budget includes significant investment in infrastructure. I noticed that the Premier spoke today about the \$48.5 million investment into the new Meekatharra health service. We understand that that will not cover the full redevelopment of that hospital, but even one of the oldest hospitals in our system is getting love and attention from the McGowan government in the 2021–22 budget.

Mental health services are benefiting from our \$1.9 billion package in health and mental health care, which includes a significant number of services right across regional and metropolitan Western Australia. We know that if we can continue to fund mental health services in the community, we will get a better outcome for the community and a better outcome in people not needing to present to hospitals with acute conditions. That is why we need to make sure that we continue to invest in these things. Of course, we cannot invest in community mental health services unless we have the workforce to do it, which is the reason I am so proud of the investment in nurse graduates this

Mr Shane Love; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Simon Millman;  
Mrs Jessica Stojkovski

---

year, which will see 2 000 nurse graduates come into our system, including specialised streams in mental health nursing. That is how we keep our young nurses interested in specialising in mental health care and increase our workforce and our opportunity to improve services.

This is a great budget that will benefit people throughout Western Australia. It is disappointing that those opposite cannot see the great work going into health, housing, and, of course, skills development in Western Australia, because it is all there in this budget for everyone to see.

**MR S.A. MILLMAN (Mount Lawley — Parliamentary Secretary)** [5.48 pm]: I rise to make a very brief contribution to this debate. I listened to the contributions that were made by members of the opposition and I must say that I actually thought they were quite thoughtful contributions, although there was no unifying theme that tied their contributions together. If I consider each of the contributions as being from somebody who is genuinely seeking to represent their community, I make no criticism. I was a bit disappointed when the member for Roe went off on a bit of a tangent about one vote, one value, without addressing the merits of the argument, but we will leave that to one side and I will come back later to the problem of royalties for regions under the administration of the previous government. I was impressed, though, I must say, that he identified the pernicious influence of religious fanatics and evangelical fundamentalists in discouraging vaccinations. I thought that was a very worthwhile contribution from the member for Roe. All the members of the opposition raised matters that we, as a Labor government, think are genuinely important. They raised issues about housing, homelessness, jobs and health. From my perspective, one of the most important issues they raised was mental health in schools.

I will come to each of those points in turn, but I want to start with the overall proposition that the McGowan government's budget abandons local communities. This budget has been presented in the context of a global pandemic and on the back of the way in which the community of Western Australia has been tackling COVID-19. Great credit goes to the Minister for Health and the Premier for the leadership they have provided during the COVID pandemic. When we talk about our local communities, the one thing that I would like to say is that we have not abandoned our local communities. We respect and admire our local communities for having joined us in tackling the COVID pandemic. There is no way that we would be in the situation that we are in today were it not for the fact that our local communities stepped up when called upon by the Premier and the Minister for Health. They were called on to take difficult decisions. They were called on to make personal sacrifices. Yet, acting collectively as a community, we worked to tackle COVID-19.

Rather than abandoning our local communities, we have worked hand in hand with those local communities to make sure that we are facing down the threat of the coronavirus pandemic. It has meant that our economy is now better placed than many other economies around the world. Two of the issues that are addressed in the motion, housing and skills, are, as the Minister for Health has just said, tied directly to the fact that our economy is outperforming many other economies. These are, if you will, good problems to have. These are a testament to the fact that the economy is going well and is standing up. We know that we need to tackle these problems, and other speakers will talk about what we are doing to tackle the issues in housing and health.

When I am out doorknocking and speaking to people in the community of Mount Lawley, they tell me that they want to remain safe from COVID. They want a government that continues with the cautious, deliberate and health-influenced evidence-based policy that has served us so well so far. They want access to vaccines. The response from the over 60s in just the last couple of days to our announcement that Pfizer will be available has been incredible. People in our communities want access to quality education. People in our communities want access to health. People in our communities have not been abandoned. They want a plan that will protect our environment. People in our communities know that they have not been abandoned when we formulate a plan for community safety. The lazy interpretation of this budget is that we have benefited simply from iron ore royalties. Members must bear in mind that our mining industry would not have continued to operate were it not for the fact that the government and the community have been handling the pandemic in the way that they have.

**Dr D.J. Honey:** But the mining industry in every single state stayed open.

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** What about Brazil? How did Brazil go? The member is undermining our COVID response.

**Dr D.J. Honey:** Every other state kept its mining industry open.

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** The member is going to get himself into strife. The rivers of money that came from our iron ore mines have kept the Australian and Western Australian economies going. We would not be in anywhere near that position if we had allowed COVID into our state and it had infected our fly-in fly-out workforce and they were unable to continue their endeavours. The member was not here when I complemented him for his contribution. He is completely undermining what I said about the worthwhile way in which he contributed to this debate, notwithstanding that he lacked a coherent narrative. I want to be quick because there are other speakers and I am eating into their time with these ridiculous interjections.

Mr Shane Love; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Simon Millman;  
Mrs Jessica Stojkovski

---

This budget delivers those things. It delivers quality education. Look at the significant investment. Just in the seat of Mount Lawley, there is a \$15 million investment in Mount Lawley Senior High School. We are spending money on health. One of the great challenges of government is to identify the problems, issues and challenges that are coming and then to respond accordingly. One of the things that we have been able to do through studious and steady financial management is provide the capacity for us to fund the health system in the way it needs to be funded. A \$1.8 billion women's and babies' hospital could never have been paid for on the trajectory of debt and deficit that we were left by the Barnett government. I do not know what the Liberal Party stands for. In my five years in this place, I still do not know what it stands for, because it keeps chopping and changing. However, I do know what the Labor Party stands for.

One of the things I will return to in my speech on the budget later on is the way in which we have used our fiscal responsibility and discipline to provide us with the capacity to make the investments that are necessary to deliver all the things that the opposition members talked about—a healthy community, access to education, mental health in schools, a plan to protect our environment, and community safety. These are the things that this budget speaks to and that money is set aside to tackle. I acknowledge the contributions that members have made, but if they paid attention to what was going on and looked at what is contained in this budget, they would see that those matters are traversed and addressed, and the only reason we have the capacity to do that is our sound financial management up until this point.

**MRS J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI (Kingsley — Parliamentary Secretary)** [5.55 pm]: Wow; what a breathtakingly ridiculous motion this is! I empathise with the minister because the opposition's capacity, as a team or as individuals, to prosecute a cohesive argument is severely lacking. The member for Cottesloe could not even manage his own contribution time. "Contribution" is probably a bit generous—speech.

**Dr D.J. Honey** interjected.

**Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI:** He forgot to ask for his extension. It is not surprising that members opposite could not manage a budget when they cannot even manage a speech!

If we compare this budget with the last budget of the Liberal government in 2016–17, we find that it had a deficit of \$3.9 billion following a deficit of \$2 billion in the previous year, and debt was estimated to be \$27.9 billion in 2016–17 and rising to \$40.2 billion by June 2020. I think it is pretty rich of them to stand and attempt to claim that this budget, which delivers on health, housing and skills, has abandoned the community. This word "abandon" is interesting. I would like to bring to the member for Moore's attention how he has abandoned his community and how his community is calling him out on it. Recently, there was a grievance in this house about the Jurien Bay marina. Yes, the member for Moore did the grievance, but it was on the back of a lot of hard work by Hon Sandra Carr, MLC, with the Minister for Transport, to whom I am the parliamentary secretary. It was a lot of her hard work that brought this to the attention —

**Mr R.S. Love** interjected.

**Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI:** I am not taking interjections, thanks.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.A. Munday):** Member for Moore!

**Mr R.S. Love** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Moore!

**Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI:** It was on the back of the hard work of Hon Sandra Carr, who brought this to the attention of the minister and fought for it.

**Mr R.S. Love** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Moore!

**Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI:** The member for Moore's own community is calling him out. One comment on Facebook says —

Shane Love —

Their words, not mine —

put this in on the back of other peoples work, AFTER the budget was completed. Think about that for a second.

The member then bleated that it was his grievance.

**Mr R.S. Love** interjected.

**Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI:** The member's grievance was submitted on the back of other people's work after the budget was completed.

Mr Shane Love; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Simon Millman;  
Mrs Jessica Stojkovski

---

**Mr R.S. Love** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI:** If the member wants to talk about people abandoning their community, I suggest that he does not need to look across the chamber; he needs to look in a mirror!

I want to be very quick because I know the member for Cockburn wants to make some very valid points on housing. I want to make a very quick comment about the funding that is going to Joondalup Health Campus. There is \$256 million for major redevelopments and expansions at Joondalup Health Campus, including a new mental health building. This is in direct response to the hounding that the poor Minister for Health has had to endure over the last four years from me, the member for Joondalup, the member for Burns Beach, the member for Landsdale and the member for Wanneroo.

**Mr R.H. Cook:** They're unrelenting!

**Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI:** Unrelenting hounding. In fact, I am sure that the member for Landsdale has been hounding ministers and shadow ministers for much longer than I have. We now have more members in our chamber to continue to hound the minister on this matter. We understand that we have a growing population in the northern suburbs and it needs to be serviced. Our minister has recognised this and he has put in place some funding for mental health, including 30 new acute mental health inpatient beds; 12 emergency department patient beds; a behavioural assessment urgent clinic; 90 inpatient beds; six new critical care beds; an increased number of parking bays, which I know is very close to our constituents' hearts as there is nowhere to park there; a new operating theatre; and a cardiac catheter laboratory. These things have come about because this government has listened to the members in this house who represent the northern suburbs and their constituents. We have not abandoned our communities at all. We are the ones who are advocating for them. We are the ones who are getting the funding for them. We understand that it is partly funded by the commonwealth; none of us has ever claimed that it was not. This is not a funding stream that became apparent only in 2017. This is a funding stream that was available to members opposite when they were in government; they just chose not to use it. They did not have the capacity, will or talent to go to the federal government and request the funding.

I would like to give the member for Cockburn some time, but I have gotten a little bit upset and a little bit entrenched in this argument. I can prosecute a good argument with a really sound foundation, unlike the opposition. I want to make mention of the \$1.8 billion for the women's and babies' hospital. This is a compassionate response as we are listening to the community. I thank the minister for this. I know that it is a very touchy subject for some.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

*Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm*