

Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Shane Love; Acting Speaker; Mr Reece Whitby; Ms Simone McGurk; Mr John Carey;
Mr David Michael; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Dave Kelly

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR V.A. CATANIA (North West Central) [10.36 am]: I would firstly like to congratulate all the new members in this house and those who have been re-elected on the honour and privilege of serving their electorates in this place. I would also like to acknowledge and congratulate the first woman Speaker of the house, Hon Michelle Roberts, who I am sure will do a sterling job in that position.

I would like to acknowledge the former member for Warren–Blackwood, Hon Terry Redman, for his contributions to this place, his electorate and the Nationals WA. I also acknowledge the former member for Geraldton, Ian Blayney, who made the courageous decision to join the Nationals in 2019; I thank him for his service to the people of Geraldton. I would also like to congratulate James Hayward on his election to South West Region; he will take his seat in the other place in the next couple of weeks and become Hon James Hayward.

Many members of the previous Parliament lost their seats in this house, and that does not impact on their lives alone; it also impacts, of course, on the lives of their families. Family members often suffer in silence because of their partners' pursuit of public life in order to serve their electorate and do well in the public eye. Recognition needs to be given to members' families. If I can offer some advice to new members, it is that family needs to come first. To succeed as the member for your electorate, family is absolutely critical to doing the job you have been elected to do.

I would also like to congratulate the Labor Party, which obviously had resounding success in the 2021 state election. We will have to wait and see how that success ultimately plays out over the next four years in this place. I am sure it will be a test of whether the people's place can still operate with open and transparent checks and balances for the people of Western Australia. I would like to thank the people of the electorate of North West Central for electing me to my fourth term, with close to a five per cent swing on my primary vote.

Dr D.J. Honey: Congratulations.

Mr R.S. Love: Congratulations.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Thank you, members.

That is due to the long and hard road of travelling over 140 000 kilometres a year in the largest electorate in state Parliament, to ensure that I do the work that is needed.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Madam Acting Speaker, I would like to do this in silence, if that is possible.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Bassendean!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: This cannot be done without family. I would like to thank my patient wife, Dani, and my five beautiful children who are teenagers, Jack, Tom, Nicholas, Isy and Rosie, for their understanding and support during this election campaign, which would have been much harder not having them around.

You cannot win elections unless you have a good team of loyal supporters around you. I would like to personally thank branch president Paul Dixon, Belinda, Josh, Elliot, Paul Kelly, Lee-Ann Daly, Turk Shales, Pete Clancy, John Spargo, Ashley Dowden, Ross and Pix Pigdon, Karen Williams, Peter Grundy, Noel and, of course, our polling booth workers and all the branch members in my electorate, of which there are quite a few. To my good friends and candidates in the Mining and Pastoral Region who gave it their all, I would like to say a huge thankyou for the tireless work undertaken to cover such a large and challenging electorate. I want to say thank you to Nick Fardell, Lionel Quartermaine, Tessa Daly, Mark Young and Kieran Dart. All I can say is: do not give up fighting for regional Western Australia.

Earlier this year, just before the election, Carnarvon experienced a flood, which is not uncommon to Carnarvon, but it still damaged quite a few plantations. Although the flood mitigation that was put in place, through the great policy and initiative by the Nationals WA called royalties for regions, managed to ensure that a percentage of those plantations were protected, the other 20 per cent of the west of the crossing was unfortunately impacted. Those plantation owners have lost quite a bit of topsoil, which the government, during election time, committed to provide

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\$1 million to replace. It is about timing and ensuring that growers can get up and grow, and provide the produce that members and the people of Perth get to enjoy. That topsoil replacement has yet to occur, and the delays could impact the financial viability of those plantation owners and the produce that comes to Perth.

In this house we have spoken about how tropical cyclone Seroja had a devastating impact on Kalbarri and the midwest. In Kalbarri, which is a new town for my electorate, 75 per cent of homes and businesses were impacted, with major damage to 30 per cent and just over 10 per cent will have to be knocked down and rebuilt. We still hear about the forced position that the government has to move into when it comes to supporting those cyclone-affected areas. Still today, 700 homes in Kalbarri do not have power. There seems to be an impasse between Western Power and the Electrical Trades Union on having the right working conditions in order to restore power.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: That is five weeks after the cyclone and still 700 homes do not have power. That is an absolute disgrace! How about the government steps in to resolve the situation to ensure that the people of Kalbarri can get the power on?

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: I would like to hear the member's contribution. I do not want to hear this particular member. If he wants to make a speech, he is welcome to stand up later.

Mr D.J. Kelly: What point of order is that?

Mr R.S. Love: Because you're engaging in disruptive behaviour.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms K.E. Giddens): Members! I will make the decision. There is no point of order, but I do ask members to please cease their interjections.

Debate Resumed

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It is absolutely disgraceful and I urge the government to step in to ensure that the residents of Kalbarri and the midwest get looked after.

Ms S. Winton interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member!

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members, I will remind you, interjections will please cease. Thank you.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker.

When we look at the issues that face places like Kalbarri, which is in my electorate now, we see that the visitors centre needs to be equipped to ensure that it can explain to visitors and tourists what is on offer since the government opened up Kalbarri a week ago. That will ensure that they know that Kalbarri is not normal at the present moment, that there is a lot of pressure on people because they do not have power, some businesses are yet to reopen and those businesses are struggling because there is still a shortage of workers' accommodation, which is desperately needed to ensure that we can rebuild Kalbarri.

I would like to personally thank the Shark Bay crew who came down and met me straight after the cyclone, in particular the Morgan family, Jamie, Robby, John and Lisa; Colin Fitzsimons; Rodney and Cindy Appleton; Jason; and Helen Regen, who for five days were able to assist over 75 homes to clean up and help people start the rebuilding phase. I just want to say thank you. You are legends and champions of the regions.

I want to touch on my shadow portfolios. Firstly, tourism is a very important portfolio that is experiencing not only wonderful growth at this present moment, but also a two-speed economy, if you like, because of the uncertainty around people being able to visit regions and the state. Infrastructure is needed to capitalise on tourism, which is something that I have been harping on about in this place for the last 15 months. Infrastructure for power, water and telecommunications is needed to ensure that we are able to keep pace with what is happening in tourism and to ensure that there is a workforce, something that this government has failed to acknowledge and do anything about. There is a huge shortage of workers for small businesses and tourism businesses. If businesses in regional towns can find the workers, there is nowhere to house those workers because there is a housing crisis. This is why we desperately need to build workers' accommodation, to cater for that growth and the number of tourists that are coming in, particularly in towns such as Exmouth, Coral Bay and Kalbarri. As I said, the population in Exmouth is normally around 2 500 people. During the tourism high point, it had around 25 000 people. That provides a huge amount of pressure on the boat ramps and the electricity, water and sewerage supplies. Those towns need to be able to cater for tourists coming in, but businesses are not able to get workers and if they can, there is no workers' accommodation.

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This is when the government needs to use its surplus, its massive windfall, the boom—which is probably one of the biggest booms this state has ever seen, with the iron ore price reaching \$US200 a tonne—to reinvest in tourism icons, such as the One Mile jetty, the Overseas Telecommunications Commission dish and the Carnarvon Space and Technology Museum, and make sure that we have the boat ramps needed to cater for the influx of visitors and tourists who are coming into places like Exmouth and that we do not delay the artificial reefs for places like Kalbarri and Carnarvon. The list goes on. This is the time to invest. This is the time to set up our tourism destinations, including Perth. When we look at the comments made by the new Lord Mayor of the City of Perth, Basil Zempilas, he is correct: What is Perth? What does Perth have to offer? What is the government doing to be able to get people to come to Perth?

We talk about the need to have affordable airfares, not only to the regions to enable people to fly to places all around Western Australia in an affordable and competitive way until overseas travel opens up, but also the other way, to make it affordable for people in regional Western Australia to come to Perth and see the attractions, go to nice restaurants, and go to Elizabeth Quay and Kings Park and all the other places that Perth has to offer. This is where the government has neglected tourism in this state. The government says it has the Wander Out Yonder campaign. In a light-bulb moment, people in Western Australia have not been able to go anywhere. We have a captive audience. That is helping tourism and it is helping our small businesses, but the uncertainty when it comes to lockdowns is making it difficult for people to plan and book into the future, and the cancellations that take place put pressure on the small businesses that have to provide the refunds and restructure their business to minimise their loss. We talk about slogans. This is quite systemic of this government and the past government—we hear the slogans, but we do not hear about the actions that need to take place to capture and grow our tourism industry in Western Australia.

One of my other shadow portfolio areas, and I think an area that is absolutely vital, is Aboriginal affairs. That is absolutely critical. I have heard and read the valedictory speeches of Hon Robin Scott and Hon Robin Chapple. They make some very valid points about their observations during their time as members for the Mining and Pastoral Region. The Native Title Act has issues. It has problems, members. The Native Title Act was originally handed down so that Aboriginal people could negotiate and mediate to resolve recognition of Aboriginal people's ongoing connection with their land. There are native title cases that take years, and sometimes decades, to be resolved in courts, rather than through negotiation. The act needs to be reviewed. I repeat: the Native Title Act needs to be reviewed. The act causes division within Aboriginal communities. It puts family against family. The act has lost, in my belief, the intent that it originally set out to achieve. The question in my mind is: how has it improved the lives of Aboriginal people and communities? This is one of the questions that need to be asked. That is why I urge the federal government to review the Native Title Act so that it will reflect what it was originally set out to do and be able to keep pace with what is happening at the moment.

As members would be aware, the parties to a native title claim can be numerous and diverse, and their relationships very complex. Native title and Aboriginal affairs is a very complex area. For example, the claim of the Thalanyji people in my electorate involved more than 35 parties. That is just one claim. I am sure the member for Kimberley will understand this. A huge number of people are now involved in native title negotiations. If more than one Aboriginal group is claiming native title, disagreements between Aboriginal groups may delay or even derail the native title claim. One group may decide to lodge its own claim, or disagree with another group's decision, and claims may have to go back to the drawing board, taking more years to be resolved. Disagreements may cause splits between families that have relatives on both sides, creating an environment for violence between the groups. Disagreements between Aboriginal parties sometimes split families forever.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr V.A. CATANIA: If elders' views conflict with the agenda of others, they may be deliberately excluded from native title deliberations.

Many Aboriginal people live on land that is rich in resources and brings wealth to Australia but delivers little for Indigenous peoples. I think the common misconception about native title is that when people hear about tens of millions of dollars in the bank, they think it is like when we sell a house or do a development—they expect that those native title groups will get that cash windfall. That is often and clearly not the case. The perception that native title holders have tens of millions in the bank often influences government when it comes to providing the necessary infrastructure that is required, such as education, health and housing. One would say that the way in which native title is being conducted these days is actually discriminatory towards Aboriginal people, because they are not in control of how native title can benefit their members and their families to ensure that Aboriginal people's lives can be improved.

When it comes to financial issues, native title moneys paid to Aboriginal groups are eyed off by many parties, Aboriginal council members, and also lawyers. The amount of funding that goes into lawyers for native title is extremely concerning. Often we have seen up to 80 per cent of the funds lost to so-called experts.

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Mr R.H. Cook: Like yourself.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: You're a fool! I'm not even going to bother.

Withdrawal of Remark

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms K.E. Giddens): Member for North West Central, I ask you to withdraw that comment.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Sorry?

The ACTING SPEAKER: I ask you to withdraw that comment. Thank you.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I withdraw whatever I said. I think it was "a fool". I withdraw it.

Debate Resumed

Mr V.A. CATANIA: As I said, there is a huge number of so-called experts who have created an industry around native title—a multitude of lawyers and experts who quickly emerged from the Mabo decision back in 1992. Often people would say, "What does 'Mabo' stand for?", and they would say "Money available, barristers only". That is the common catchcry when it comes to the decision.

Several members interjected.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: That is because they are the only ones benefiting from the system.

Several members interjected.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Members, it is actually —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! We have a high level of excitement today. Can we cease the interjections.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It is actually quite an important issue.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members, I have just asked you to cease interjections.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: There are also quotes from people who have made comment that —

"If ... Mabo were alive today, he would be an angry man," —

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It continues —

... "The rights he won in the High Court have been eroded away by government, courts and socio-economic pressure".

"The current system has not achieved a good outcome in land rights.

It goes on.

Members, what we have seen here is that we need an urgent review of native title. Again, the key issue when it comes to native title and our own state government is that it wants to consolidate native title determinations so that a number of groups are pulled into one native title claim. These take around 20 years to pass, which creates a profiteering environment for native title legal services. These organisations want it to be this way. They get rich. The government knows that the Aboriginal politic among the groups and subgroups will result in a lack of consensus.

Mr D.J. Kelly: You're an absolute disgrace!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The member can get up and speak, but let me tell him, this is a reflection on my discussions —

Mr D.J. Kelly: The racist history of the National Party, when it comes to native title, is plain.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The member does not know what he is talking about. I am sure that the member for Kimberley knows what I am talking about.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! I am losing my patience and I will start making calls.

Ms S. Winton interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo, you are called for the first time.

Ms S. Winton interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo!

Point of Order

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Mr V.A. CATANIA: Madam Acting Speaker, under section 95 of the standing orders can you tell these members that if they want to speak, they can get up and speak after me.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms K.E. Giddens): I am pretty sure that I have the chair, member for North West Central. Please cease your interjections. Member, you may continue.

Debate Resumed

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker. Like I said, the government knows about the Aboriginal politics amongst the groups and subgroups, which often results in a lack of consensus and provides the Western Australian government with the ability to use the land for its own benefit. Once native title is determined, the fighting and politics within these large groups provides ongoing profiteering for legal services as they need to be continually brought in to manage and administer the role of native title groups. Essentially, a handful of people represent these large groups, some of which have over 2 000 members.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Madam Acting Speaker, I thought that you ruled that members should cease interjecting.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you. You may continue, member for North West Central.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: This is an important point that members need to understand. This is not about being anti-native title, but about improving native title and the need to review native title for it to really benefit the lives of Aboriginal people. Clearly, it is not doing that at this moment in time, which is the point I am trying to make, members.

The other issue is that the prescribed bodies corporate that have been established to sit alongside Aboriginal corporations are set up to fail. PBCs and Aboriginal corporations often lack the skills and capacity to administer and govern. Mining royalties are paid to these groups that are sometimes run by a questionable chief executive officer. Last year in this place, I mentioned how the CEO of an Aboriginal corporation had behaved and how tens of millions of dollars had vanished. Directors and lawyers all tend to be profiting from this system. The corporations are left with no power to fight and change the system, even though the groups want reform for the subgroups to have the ability to make decisions on the use of their land and the programs and services that they could benefit from.

I will talk about the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations and its lack of will and power to assist and make sure that these Aboriginal corporations are held to account. The money that is held in these trusts is controlled by the mining companies. For example, a board is set up to determine the flow of money—all, but limited—which then goes to the board of trustees and the PBC. The Aboriginal corporation sits alongside the PBC and works out how to support its members, sometimes forming other businesses to assist and benefit a small group that has control of that Aboriginal corporation. In some instances, CEOs have taken advantage of their position to benefit themselves. Aboriginal people need to have control of native title money; that is the point that I am trying to make. The processes in place do not allow those riches that we hear about to flow to Aboriginal people. They are told by the mining company how to spend their money and they are told by the trust how to spend their money. They then go to meetings to try to get consensus amongst the group on how to split up a proportion of that money. Enough is enough! If we want to close the gap and empower Aboriginal people, this is how we do it: we allow Aboriginal people to have control of their own native title negotiations and money that has been given to them in recognition of their connection to that land. That is the point, members. That is what is missing and that is why we need a review of the Native Title Act.

I want to touch on the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations. The feedback I received from my Aboriginal constituents and Aboriginal associations is that the initial intent of ORIC when it was created as an independent regulatory authority for Aboriginal corporations was to strengthen governance, accountability and compliance. Firstly, it would focus on the vetting of CEOs who were appointed by the Aboriginal corporations to ensure that they had the skills, experience and right intent to work with an Aboriginal board. It would focus on reducing corruption and fraudulent activities, because Aboriginal directors are vulnerable to corporate abuse due to their limited director skills and experience. Secondly, it would provide governance and corporate skills training to Aboriginal boards prior to the organisations being established, stopping a volume of Aboriginal corporations being set up with limited knowledge, skills and capability to deliver an organisation appropriately. ORIC does not do this. It is poorly funded by the commonwealth, which leaves it under-resourced and ineffective. It now only focuses on annual compliance, which is rarely mentioned, not to mention the limited training support it offers to Aboriginal corporations, especially those in remote and regional areas. As a result, an oversubscribed number of Aboriginal corporations have been set up, with the majority being defunct, insolvent, in administration, non-operational or noncompliant. There needs to be an inquiry into ORIC, members.

I will be pursuing this matter as shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs because a lot more needs to be said and done in this space. I hope that members on the other side support and echo the calls for a review of the Native Title Act

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and ensure that an inquiry is held into the way that ORIC conducts itself, and the impact that has on Aboriginal corporations and Aboriginal people in this state.

Amendment to Motion

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I move —

That the following words be added to the motion —

but regret to inform His Excellency that unless the McGowan government addresses the need for housing assistance in the wake of tropical cyclone Seroja, there is a risk of depopulation in midwest communities

This is a very important amendment that I am sure the member for Moore will speak on, because, as I said, 700 houses are still without any power five weeks after the event. It is absolutely disgraceful.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [11.08 am]: I would like to speak to this amendment moved by the member for North West Central, and in doing so, once again put on the record my concern for the people affected by tropical cyclone Seroja. Many of them are still undergoing very real hardship, as the member for North West Central said. As of Tuesday, many weeks after the event, 794 properties throughout the midwest are still without power. That is a long period for people to have gone without power. Other people not only do not have power, they also have no roof over their heads. Strictly speaking, that is not true; they may have a roof over their heads, but it is a temporary arrangement as their homes have been badly damaged or destroyed. This problem is widespread across the impact zone, which spreads from Kalbarri in the member for North West Central's area, a town I used to represent until March this year, and we have seen it devastated, primarily as the first impact point of the cyclone. Many of the homes and public buildings suffered damage and many were destroyed. That cyclone then went across many other areas in the midwest such as the rest of the Shire of Northampton. Binu Primary School was badly affected, as were farmers around the Binu area. The cyclone went down through Ogilvie and Northampton itself, impacting some of the iconic buildings of Northampton. People who have not been to Northampton might not appreciate the history of that place. There is a very long history around Northampton. There are very many houses and buildings of significant heritage value, the bottom pub being one of them, and that has been very severely impacted. It lost its roof and was structurally damaged. The cyclone then carried through to the Shire of Chapman Valley and the City of Greater Geraldton. Members might be surprised to understand that I represent most of the City of Greater Geraldton in geographic terms. Of course, the member for Geraldton represents the vast majority of the population, but most of the landmass used to be the Shire of Mullewa, which is in my electorate and takes in many of the areas affected badly by the cyclone. The cyclone went down through the Mingenew, Morawa and Perenjori shires, touching on the Carnamah and Three Springs shires and into Dalwallinu and beyond. I am told that the impact area was about 100 kilometres in width and it was 700 kilometres inland before the storm damage became less.

One of the characteristics of those affected communities is that many of the towns are quite small. Many have old buildings and houses within them, and quite a few are made of asbestos. There is a problem with what will happen next in those communities. It is very difficult to borrow money from a bank to build a house in a small country town. There are very real limits on what banks will loan people to build a house. There are also very real problems with the insurance values, because the insurance value of a 40 or 50-year-old asbestos house will in no way cover the cost of rebuilding it. As we know, there is also a building boom going on, with skills and material shortages leading to steep price rises even in the metropolitan area. If those issues in the metropolitan area are taken out of it, we have to add on a percentage of the cost for every few kilometres we are further out from the circle.

It is hard to get workers out to places like Perenjori or Morawa. There is very little accommodation for people there at the moment, because already there are families there who do not have somewhere to live. The excess capacity that some shires might have had in their own buildings and caravan parks has already been soaked up in making sure that citizens who have lost their houses have somewhere to go. In fact, after the cyclone first hit, I went to some of the badly affected communities, and one of the shire CEOs raised the point with me that he was very grateful for all the help the shire had received from groups like the State Emergency Service and others, but there was no understanding amongst emergency services of the level of disruption in those towns or that the volunteer crews that came up should have brought a communications network of their own because there were no communications in the area they came to—zero. There were no phone lines, no mobiles—nothing. There was no power, so there was no way for those people to have a campsite. Some of them showed up without accommodation looking for somewhere to stay—in a place where there was already no accommodation—and they did not have any extra fuel. Of course, there was no fuel in the towns. Some of the towns had fuel at the service station, but people could not get it out, because they did not have a generator that was capable of running the pump systems. These problems need to be understood. It is a learning process for the Department of Fire and Emergency Services to understand that there needs to be a self-contained capacity in going to areas to assist, given the breadth of the damage. Everybody knows the

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first damage was apparent in those communities just north of Geraldton, but it took a while for it to emerge just how widespread the damage was throughout the rest of the area because of the lack of communications.

We have heard that there are 794-odd connections still without power as of Tuesday. A lot of those people are running generators to provide their own power—to provide household power and power for their water pumping et cetera. A lot of those generators are fairly cheap petrol generators that are very expensive to run. They are not really meant for continuous service. They have already been running for several weeks and they may be running for several more weeks. When the government makes an application to the federal government for further assistance, it should consider in its compensation the costs that people have been put through. As we heard yesterday, an approach is being made for category C assistance under the disaster relief arrangements with the commonwealth. That is welcome news, and I know that the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development is on the ground gathering information from farming and other communities, looking at some of the welfare aspects of the towns and DFES is trying to understand and coordinate that to put the application through. Recognition of the cost that people have had to go through to generate their own power for this length of time needs to be part of that assessment. It is a question I have been meaning to ask in the house, but I have not had the opportunity. I just put on the record that there is a very real impost on those people who have been living through that situation.

As I have said before, many of those communities are quite small. Some of them have suffered a long run of depopulation already. One of the concerns that the communities have is the fact that they may suffer further population loss if there is not an urgent focus on addressing the housing situation. I intend mainly to talk about the Shire of Mingenew because, quite surprisingly and handily enough, there was an article in the *Midwest Times* about that area only this week. It quotes the president of the Shire of Mingenew, Gary Cosgrove. He talks in the article about having 29 displaced residents and a big concern that that will lead to a further dwindling of the town's population. On the front page is a picture of a very old asbestos house. I know it is a bit hard to see in black and white. I have visited that house and I know the gentleman who owns it. I really do not think the insurance is going to cover the cost of rebuilding that house. Whether that means the gentleman stays in Mingenew or moves to Geraldton or Perth is rather the problem.

There is already a hollowing out of the small communities like Morawa, Mullewa, Mingenew and the like as people leave to get services in Geraldton. I have spoken before about this, but there seems to be a delivery pattern for many of the government and human services delivered in the midwest that relies on people accessing them from Geraldton. I am aware that in other regions there is much more outreach, but in the midwest there is a peculiar method of delivery that is completely centred on Geraldton. Indeed, when the first impact of the cyclone hit, while there were power losses in Geraldton and some loss of food, other people in my electorate and that of the member for North West Central were sheltering under tarpaulins, in sheds, in caravans or in cars because they had nowhere to sleep. Yet when I drove through Geraldton to go to Northampton, there was a line of people outside the QEII Seniors and Community Centre getting money or vouchers for hundreds of dollars—I assume from the Department of Communities; I am not sure—for their losses. Nobody in Chapman Valley, Mingenew or Morawa was getting assistance at that point.

Ms S.F. McGurk: Just because there were people in the queue doesn't mean that money was being given out.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Ms S.F. McGurk: I wasn't talking to you. It doesn't mean that money was being given out; it means that people were in a queue.

Mr R.S. LOVE: They were in a huge queue. The QEII centre is a long way from the road. Right through the car park was a snaking queue. There were hundreds of people lining up. I assume they were lining up to be handed some much-needed cash. I am not denying they probably needed some money; they probably had suffered loss.

Mr V.A. Catania: Member, they were. As the minister should be aware, it was reported in the media on ABC and in the *Midwest Times* that there were queues of people going there to get support.

Ms S.F. McGurk interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.A. Munday): Members! The member for Moore is speaking.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The point I am trying to make is that the people who were most badly affected were not able to access money at that point. It took quite a while for that assistance to reach those communities. I am talking about the delivery of services in the midwest, and that is an example of how that delivery is very Geraldton-centric. I am not taking away from the needs of people there, but there are further needs. We have a system—I see it in my own electorate—under which if there is a big town and a small town, most delivery of services ends up in the big towns. The smaller towns and areas often miss out. I am just making the point that there is need right across the impacted area. I am sure that the emergency and other services are well aware of it. I am not criticising the minister at all. I spoke to the minister about this issue and she was very responsive, and I appreciate her assistance, but I am pointing out that there is a bit of an issue with the system in that area. We need to ensure that people throughout the region,

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not just people in Geraldton, have access to government services. I am not criticising the minister or people in Geraldton; I am just pointing out the problem.

I will get back to talking about the situation in Mingenew. People there have been very proactive in putting their concerns on the record. I have been furnished with not only this article from *The West Australian*, but also an impact statement for the shire, which is a government of Western Australia State Emergency Management Committee impact study on the Shire of Mingenew as at April 2021, from which I will read a few quotes so that people get an understanding of the problem. But what I am basically standing here saying is that attention and focus needs to be put on ensuring that people can rebuild in these communities and can be offered something in the meantime so that they do not drift into Geraldton and never come back. We want them to stay in their communities and local towns. I have also made some communications to the City of Perth, to the Lord Mayor's Distress Relief Fund, pointing out my concerns about what might happen and asking that that be considered.

The article in *The West Australian* states that 29 residents were displaced in Mingenew. It quotes the shire president —

“If they leave town we will never get them back.

“Our biggest threat to small towns is declining population—we can't afford to lose anyone.”

The article goes on to highlight the situation in nearby Perenjori. As I have said, that is another community that was badly affected by the situation. The shire provided housing in town for nine adults and four children who had been displaced from homes on farms. That is another point: the towns have been impacted, but I think that most of the housing losses are out in the farming communities. It is not unusual to hear reports of some farms losing two or three homes on one farm, because a lot of those people have, over time, amalgamated several properties with houses on their land. They might have accommodation for the permanent or seasonal workers and another house that is lived in and owned by the family. That is the situation. In the Shire of Mingenew, the CEO said that 21 of the displaced adults lived up to 50 kilometres from town. These people are out in the farming communities, not just in town. This is a situation that needs to be addressed.

The shadow Minister for Housing has been up there; I do not know whether the Minister for Housing has also been up there. But the government needs to focus on ensuring that there is a temporary housing response and accommodation for these people so that they stay in the area and farmers have accommodation for their workers. The government needs to work with insurance companies and funding agencies to try to make sure that things like asbestos removal and planning can go ahead smoothly and all the building fees and red tape can be smoothed over so that we can facilitate people getting back to their homes and staying in their communities.

The Shire of Morawa was also affected, with 30 residential properties either severely damaged or entirely destroyed. That is not including those other communities that I have already mentioned, such as Chapman Valley, Northampton, those in the City of Greater Geraldton, Dalwallinu et cetera. These impacts are ongoing—many farming families are still without power and could be for some time. The power issue has also been very difficult. In many cases, the powerlines and infrastructure have been down, which has prevented people from getting onto their properties to do their seeding. As we know, that is time critical.

I will talk about a couple of points in the impact statement that I have from the shire. Its main concern is housing for the shire's displaced persons. It states —

- Main concern remains the Shire's displaced persons
- Secondary concern is availability of housing for seasonal workers ...

Where will the workers stay when they come for harvest et cetera? The shire was hoping to have some updates from the Department of Communities and the like on assisting with that. This document is now a few weeks old. The shire was actively looking for temporary accommodation. It wanted to understand the medium-term plans from the Department of Communities for those displaced persons, it was waiting for builders and needed the capacity to look after the people who will come to help out, as well.

The report continues under “Medium-Term Housing” to state that the shire's displaced population is in temporary accommodation or with friends and family, which is likely to be viable for only a few weeks. It states that many of the rural property owners are insured but are unable to easily relocate for housing, and housing will have to come to them. There are concerns about the speed at which housing can be repaired and about the rebuild time and cost, but, of course, for those people in older houses in some towns, my concern is that it will be easier for them to consider just moving somewhere else—taking a bit of money from the insurance or whatever and heading off. We do not want to see that happen. I want to see those towns thrive, not go to the wall. I have spoken before about asbestos. That is raised as a concern for the shire, as is underinsurance. Right through this document there is a reiteration of those workforce issues.

With that, I commend the proposed amendment to the house.

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MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldvis — Minister for Emergency Services) [11.28 am]: I appreciate the opportunity to be able to speak on this issue, because so much has happened in a very short time, and I appreciate the concerns of members opposite.

In Western Australia, we are all concerned about the impact of cyclone Seroja. It has been devastating and widespread. I am always at pains to state—when I have been in the Agricultural Region and in Perth, I have always made this point—that the media and most people concentrated on the dramatic damage in Kalbarri because it is a place that is familiar to many Western Australians, but this disaster has had a widespread impact. In the north of the state, if a cyclone hits a town in the Pilbara or Kimberley, it is usually a centre by itself and there are very few outlying communities. When there is damage, it is concentrated on one community and one town, and it is easy to deal with and easy to see. It is a different situation in the midwest, which is not used to cyclonic activities. It is very important to remember it is widespread and that it affects a range of communities, large and small. Let us remember, members, that it is 13 May and that this cyclone struck on 11 April; it was just over one month ago, yet the response to this disaster has been enormous and widespread. Support has not been centred on Geraldton at all; it has not been Geraldton-centric, as has been suggested. There has been a massive effort to get into the smaller communities and towns to respond to this issue.

A comment was made about long lines of people waiting for assistance at the QEII Seniors and Community Centre in Geraldton. I was there the day after those long lines at the centre, and it was explained to me that it was a one-off event. It was the first time that many people had realised that support was available. It was a process of trying to manage the number of people there. There was a long line, but it was swiftly and very professionally dealt with by staff at that centre—a combination of staff from federal and state agencies. The Department of Communities was there. The people from the Department of Communities either came from the regions or Perth and they did an amazing job. They are recognisable from their purple polo tops. They are passionate and they want to help people. That is their guiding force; that is what they are about. They managed to get a system up, they took names and they were able to get to people and book appointments. That issue was smoothed out. It was a testament to the professionalism and commitment of the people at that centre in how they dealt with that issue, and the queues were seen on one day—and maybe not for the whole day.

Mr R.S. Love: I was not intending to criticise anyone.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Fair enough, too, but I thought I would explain that.

We have been reaching out to remote communities. I have made a point of doing that when I have gone there. I visited the QEII centre in Geraldton, but, apart from that, Geraldton has been the transit point for me, as it has for other members before they go to Kalbarri and Northampton; and I have been to Morawa and Perenjori as well. I know my cabinet colleagues have been right throughout the areas.

Mr R.S. Love: It is much appreciated that you have travelled to those places.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Indeed, 13 local governments in the area have been activated under disaster recovery arrangements with the federal government. The member referred to displaced residents in Mingenew, was it?

Mr R.S. Love: Mingenew was the centre I was mainly talking about, but also Morawa and Perenjori.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: There was a report of an issue in Mingenew and my colleague the Minister for Housing would like to elaborate on that, and perhaps my colleague the Minister for Commerce more directly. I understand that there was a report initially about 27 families; it turned out to be 27 people, so that was a reduced number. Communities reached out in the first instance to half those people and spoke to them directly and asked what were their requirements. I understand that one family of four people required accommodation, while the others said that they were okay. On a second attempt to contact the balance of those people, everyone said that they did not require accommodation. I think initial reports can be a bit misleading. It sounded quite concerning, but when we got to the nub of the issue, short-term emergency accommodation was not needed by all those people.

I understand that it has been very trying for a lot of families. I understand that in many rural communities people just get on with it and find a way to deal with it. I know that some of those local governments have been very good and have accommodation in town. The member mentioned Perenjori, where fortunately about a dozen homes had gas hot water so that when power was an issue, farmers still were able to have a warm shower at the end of the day, which I know was welcomed. The member for Roe made the point that this issue affects people right out in the smaller towns and outlying farming communities, and how farmers are coping with this. I have spoken to those farmers that the member mentioned. I have been to their properties. I heard stories of how they hid under the table with their family as the roof was peeling off. I know what they have gone through; I know about their losses, and I have spoken to them directly. This does not take away from the need for assistance, but when I have asked how they felt when their house was being torn apart and they were under that table, the response was, “Oh, it was all right.” This is the stoic nature of farmers—they get on with it!

That assistance has definitely been there. We have people from the Department of Communities and a range of agencies reaching out to those communities. I know that when the Department of Fire and Emergency Services

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had to assess the damage, staff were making contact with farmers and people on those properties and surrounding communities but they also have the radar on in terms of the support they needed. Psychological support is another issue we have to consider and think carefully about.

As the member knows, we are working with the federal government on the disaster recovery funding arrangements, which will help unlock support for primary producers. This is where farmers and also small business can get assistance through state and federal arrangements, which is on top of the announced support with the \$4 000 grants we have announced for small business already. We have also appointed the State Recovery Controller, Mel Pexton. I am not aware whether the member knows that she has a background in local government and emergency management within DFES. She is a very capable person. She hit the ground running. The day after she was appointed, she was visiting those communities. She has gone back many times and made it a point to visit all those communities—the smaller towns throughout the midwest and beyond, right down to Dalwallinu, which is the point at which the damage stopped occurring. The member would be aware of the dire need for accommodation, both immediate and long term. However, some of the homes in Kalbarri were holiday homes so that is not so much an issue, but where that is not the case, people often find accommodation with friends or relatives or they move to Geraldton or they manage to do repairs. They get up there and they manage to make their house sustainable.

I know in Northampton, Communities and others urged people to leave and seek more comfortable accommodation in Geraldton, but most people did not want to leave. There is a real sense of community in Northampton, in particular, and people did not want to leave their properties. A partial issue was leaving their valuables in a damaged home and the fear they might lose something. I do not think that was a reality, but we made it known to them that they had the support of the police.

Mr R.S. Love: They live in Northampton because they like it there.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Exactly, member. There was a bit of a security issue, but we assured them police would be in town keeping an eye on this. But it is their home. A lot of people of retirement age go to Kalbarri and Northampton, and they do not want to leave. They want to stay there; that is where they are. We get that. But there is a need to address accommodation needs. Initially, it is with displaced people out of damaged homes, people who reside in those towns and communities. That issue is being addressed very rapidly. I have not spoken about the financial support from Communities and the federal government so that people can get accommodation independently; they get the financial wherewithal to do that.

The secondary concern that we mentioned was the need to make sure that workers on farms—people employed in Kalbarri and elsewhere, and towns across this region—have accommodation. That is crucial. An ongoing issue right across Western Australia is accommodation for workers in these towns and communities. The third accommodation need is for the reconstruction workforce. When it is time to rebuild, we need to put those tradies somewhere. We have had widespread discussions with industry. I have personally spoken to the Master Builders Association, the Housing Industry Association and major builders such as David Carruthers in Geraldton, who the member would know, and who they tell me basically built Geraldton, and talked about this issue and how we can progress and get tradies up into the region. It is a key focus for our disaster recovery coordinator as well. In short, and I will end here, as I have just described, enormous effort and enormous attention and focus has been paid to the issue of accommodation for these affected communities. It began on day one as a concern. I can remember speaking to ABC radio and others about what we will do about accommodation, so it quickly became an issue that we were aware would have to be addressed. It has been an ongoing journey. This is week four or five since the cyclone hit. It is very early days in the scheme of things, because we all recognise that it will take a long time to get back to normal. However, I understand tourists are already back in Kalbarri; businesses are already operating in Kalbarri since those roads have opened; and the tourist businesses that can open have actually opened. That is a good story that needs to get out. I take the public opportunity now to say to the community: if you want to go to Kalbarri, do so but please make sure you have accommodation arranged. Let us get Kalbarri back on its feet. It will be a slow start, but it is important that we make a start now.

Member, I suggest that this motion is ill-advised. It does not recognise the reality of what is happening and I think the reaction and the response from emergency services, industry and the state, federal and local governments have been very impressive and will continue to be.

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Community Services) [11.40 am]: I want to address some of these issues because, as the Minister for Emergency Services pointed out, the Department of Communities has had a presence in part of the emergency response. It has traditionally been part of its role in response to a natural disaster to set up the emergency response relief centres and provide, if you like, a clearing house so that people can help and be directed to the sort of assistance they need. I therefore thought people might be interested in hearing how that practical support has been applied. I am interested to see that even though the member for North West Central moved this amendment, he has not bothered to hear the government's response. I think that illustrates his level of real interest and concern.

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Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: I believe it is not considered appropriate to reflect on a person's absence from the chamber.

Ms S.F. McGurk: What is your point of order?

Mr R.S. LOVE: I just read it out.

Ms S.E. Winton: She didn't suggest that. You're the one who pointed it out.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.A. Munday): Minister, carry on.

Debate Resumed

Ms S.F. McGURK: Thank you, Acting Speaker.

I actually attended in Northampton myself last week after I was with the member for Geraldton doing some work in Geraldton. I took the opportunity to travel up to Northampton and visit the centre there. It was great to see the relief centre, where I was welcomed at the reception by two volunteers from Australian Red Cross, who had come across from Queensland. It was a retired couple who were very energetic and experienced in this sort of work. A number of agencies were collocated there. The Department of Communities was doing its work there and the Salvation Army had a financial counsellor there and there was other assistance. But, importantly, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency had been specifically contracted to make sure it could do one-on-one case management for people who needed assistance, and, of course, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services was there as well. I think in question time on the following day, I mentioned that at that visit I had met Edith Blood, who is 91 years old. Her daughter works for the Department of Communities in Geraldton. As the Minister for Emergency Services pointed out, she is a very stoic member of the community. She was in her house when the cyclone took place, but, fortunately, her son was with her. Her comment was that she seemed to handle it a lot better than her son did. In any case, her house was not severely damaged.

There was good coordination. People made the point that we need to make sure that we are doing outreach, not just relying on people coming into those centres, but going out, knocking on doors and making sure people understood that assistance was available for them. They also made the point that the mental health impacts of a trauma such as a cyclone can take a while to land with people, so there might be delayed effects on people experiencing this sort of shock and that can delay the response needed to deal with it, so service providers are very aware of all those issues.

There is a disaster response hotline and 2 810 calls have been made to it. The majority of those calls were about financial assistance. At the close of business on 6 May, the Department of Communities had received 7 686 applications for financial assistance and had issued a total of \$1.495 million in financial assistance, the vast majority of them through electronic funds transfer and some to direct debit cards. We also have welfare and recovery centres. I mentioned the Northampton RSL, but originally we used the Kalbarri Golf and Lawn Bowls Club, which has continued. The member also mentioned the Morawa Community Resource Centre in Winfield Street. Those outreach teams present in those centres are not only a point where people can go in, but also reach out to farmers and members of the community who have not come into the centres for assistance.

The Department of Communities is working with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development to target people who may not yet have had their welfare needs assessed. The Department of Communities is also looking to set up a consistent schedule of visits to outlying towns, member, to ensure that there is some presence on the ground and we can then give feedback through people such as Mel Pexton on the needs of the community to make sure that we are in our best position to respond to them. I think it is also worth noting that some damage assessment has been made of properties. The rapid damage assessment teams have been assessing losses and these assessments are expected to change once formal building and insurance inspections have been undertaken by qualified assessors, but the initial DFES assessment is that there have been rapid damage assessments of all known habitable residential structures; that is, 1 858 are habitable, 317 are non-habitable, 20 are unknown and we are yet to get information on 266. We are starting to make sure, as I said, that we are reaching out to people through the coordinated work of departments and that we are not relying on people coming into the centre. DFES has received 1 659 requests for assistance and only 19 of them remain open, so they require continuing support.

Sixteen households, which comprise 48 people, including 23 children, have been placed in emergency accommodation since 11 April, and 14 households, which comprise 39 people, are currently in emergency accommodation. The DFES State Recovery Controller is currently leading discussions with state agencies, local authorities and partner agencies to manage the recovery process.

Finally, the food provision in Kalbarri will cease, but emergency packs are still available for people, and I could see them at the Northampton centre. In terms of personal supports, Regional Alliance West and the Midwest Mental Health and Community Alcohol and Drug Service have received funding for a team of community legal service lawyers, financial counsellors and mental health professionals from around the state to travel to the cyclone-affected

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areas in the region. These teams will be able to assist with advice on things like insurance policies, pro bono legal services and professional referrals.

I could talk also about the specific work being done in Morawa. The member mentioned that he had contacted me personally and said that there was concern that staff were travelling to and from Northampton and Geraldton each day and losing valuable time. We have recalibrated that, and accommodation has been secured in Morawa so that the staff can maximise their time dealing with local residents. The staff located at the Morawa recovery centre are split into two teams. There is a static presence at the centre, but there is also a mobile outreach team. The Department of Communities' local government liaison officer is connecting with local governments to determine current community needs and is having ongoing dialogues with them. Finally, the Department of Communities' regional director, Jamie Strickland, an experienced senior staff member from the department, has contacted the CEO of the Shire of Morawa, Gavin Treasure, to discuss the establishment of the centre and any issues requiring further consideration. Of course, the public message is that urgent welfare requests can be directed to the disaster response hotline on 1800 032 965.

I hope that I have demonstrated, from the Department of Communities' perspective, that we are working very professionally, compassionately and, most importantly, collaboratively with not only other government agencies, but also local governments, community organisations and local community members who are volunteering to make sure we are responding in the best possible way in such a challenging situation.

It is true that there will be demands for the physical rebuild of damaged properties and the replacement of uninhabitable properties; that will be a challenge. In fact, those pressures on the building industry occur not only in Western Australia; they occur all around the country. But I am confident that we have the pieces together to make a good response in a very difficult situation for that community.

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Housing) [11.51 am]: The Minister for Emergency Services is obviously the lead minister in response to this amendment, but in my capacity as Minister for Local Government, I would like firstly to acknowledge all the local governments in the midwest that have been assisting their communities. I called each of the mayors and CEOs of all the affected local shires on the first Friday to reach out. I acknowledge that they did not need to be inundated by a number of ministers, but as the Minister for Housing; Local Government, I wanted to offer any potential assistance.

On that issue I will say, very quickly—I am sure the member for Moore will agree—that this event demonstrates once again that local governments are about far more than just roads, rates and rubbish. In fact, I was deeply impressed by the smaller councils, which were really rallying points for their communities. The CEO of one local government actually got their staff to go out and visit people in their homes. Obviously, communications were down, but they sent their staff out—which was very difficult in the early days—to reach out and let residents in Perth know that they were okay. I thought that was outstanding, so if I ever hear anyone say that councils are about just roads, rates and rubbish, I will tell them to go to the councils of the midwest, because they are outstanding.

Obviously, the lead effort is coming from the State Recovery Controller, but from a Housing perspective, I think the member for Moore is absolutely right: we are all acutely aware of the next steps in respect of getting building back on track. We all know that there will be insurance claims and so forth. The main complexity will arise in getting new homes built. That is something that we are facing in Western Australia and across Australia. We have 23 000 new building approvals and it is difficult for me, as the minister responsible for public housing, to get new houses built or houses refurbished. I know the Minister for Emergency Services has been leading the charge and reaching out to industry. I will be frank: I have the same demands in the City of Swan in respect of the fires because it is facing the same predicament. My agency has been looking at the broader picture of prefabricated and modular homes and what the potential expansion of those industries could be.

I will not speak for as long as the other ministers, but with regard to the emergency response from the Housing perspective, temporary living expenses assistance is on offer to people who need temporary accommodation and are uninsured or are yet to receive an insurance payout. Perhaps less known is that because of the scale of the cyclone's impact, communities have engaged the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, which has probably been the primary agency organising and coordinating emergency assistance beyond the initial three-week period. Obviously the focus is on the first three weeks, after which people start to be able to make decisions about where they may live in temporary accommodation. But if there are issues beyond the initial three weeks, that agency has been there to provide assistance. I also note the \$4 000 payments that have now been approved for areas where houses have been destroyed.

I want to assure the member for Moore that I will work with the lead minister, the Minister for Emergency Services, but I think the member is right: the key focus should be on how government can best assist with the drive to get new homes built in that area.

Amendment put and negatived.

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Motion Resumed

MR D.R. MICHAEL (Balcatta — Parliamentary Secretary) [11.56 am]: I thank the Acting Speaker for the opportunity to speak to the Address-in-Reply. I would like to extend my congratulations to all members re-elected to this place and elected to this place for the first time, and to our new Madam Speaker for being the first woman Speaker. She has already shown some very good judgement in this chamber, but I cannot say the same for her judgement in football teams as a West Coast Eagles and East Perth supporter!

First off, I would like to thank the electors of the district of Balcatta. Thank you for the faith you have shown in me and the McGowan government. I am humbled by the support for me to continue representing our local area, which I am so passionate about. It is where I grew up, it is where I still live, it is where I went to primary and high school, and it is where I was a local government councillor. The opportunity to represent it in this place is the greatest honour of my life, and I am very humbled and thankful to my local residents to be able to do that for another four years.

I have a few thank-yous to get out of the way first. Hon Martin Pritchard, MLC, is one of the most prolific winning campaign directors in this Parliament, along with Hon Kate Doust, Hon Darren West and Hon Dr Sally Talbot. They are campaign directors on whose advice many members in this house relied at the last election. Martin and Gina, his wife, very much supported me at the last election, as they did in 2017, and I thank them for their support.

Thank you to the other members of my campaign team: Andrew Vitolins, for his continued support; and Shaun Hawkes, who did a great job of marshalling my volunteers and organising my field campaign. I think he is about to become a dad, and then I think he is going to serve the member for Bateman very, very well as an electorate officer. I thank Glenn and Fiona Sterle. I used to work with Fiona in Hon Kate Doust's office. Glenn, Fiona, Ben, Karen and Marie would come out letterboxing on weekends with me in Westminster. They provided absolutely unbelievable advice, support and assistance. I thank Benedict Coates, who was the former Whip assistant and took leave to come and campaign with me. Ben is an exceptional young man who did a very good job for me looking after social media and generally doing whatever we threw at him, and learning along the way. Ben, congratulations and thank you for your assistance.

I have been very lucky over the last four years to have a very loyal and stable electorate office. I would like to thank Andrew O'Donnell and Magenta Wilders for their continued support and help during the campaign. All members in this place rely upon our electorate office to represent us when we are here and doing other things, and both Andy and Magenta do that very well for me. I am in their debt both in this and the last election.

Mr R.R. Whitby: She's from Baldivis; she must be very good.

Mr D.R. MICHAEL: She is very good. I think she is closer to Rockingham these days, but she is from that part of the world. It is long drive or a long train ride every morning up to Balcatta.

I thank all my donors, supporters and other volunteers who have supported me. I have mentioned a few of them. I thank Giovanni Italiano and his wife, Anne; Tony, Mary and Sal Vallelonga; my booth captains, Barry Wood, Michael Crogan, Frank Paolino, David Alexander and Emma Gibbens, Dan and Anne-Marie Hill and Joe Drago. I thank David Michael Sr, who with my family looked after Tuart Hill Primary School for me on election day. I thank Carl Kobelke, who was not only a star doorknocker for me, but also booth captain at Balcatta Senior High School. It was so nice to visit Balcatta Senior High School and to have a Kobelke on the booth to stand in front of the new \$50 million Balcatta Senior High School.

Former members of Parliament are always great to talk to get advice from. I would like to thank a couple of former members, firstly, the late John Kobelke, a former member for Balcatta. For the first few years, until John passed, he was a regular visitor to my office. He was still involved in lots of community organisations and doing lots of things for our community. He was always a source of advice and assistance. I would like to thank John and his family. I thank my old boss, Bob Kucera, who represented half of my seat at one point and still gives me words of advice from time to time. I thank Jann McFarlane, who has been mentioned by the member for Scarborough and a few others in this house in the last few weeks. Jann puts in an enormous effort for the community and the Labor Party in the western suburbs of the City of Stirling. She visits the office from time to time with advice and is always there to help. I thank Nick Catania, a former member for Balcatta as well. Nick was unbelievable during the campaign. For at least one person, this might not be agreed upon by everyone on this side of the house, but I am very fond of all the Catania family! Nick Catania provided unbelievable support to me during the campaign.

Some other volunteers were standouts for us. I mentioned Michael Crogan from Osborne Park, who is an all-rounder. He joined our local branch after I assisted on lots of local government matters. He is great. Ben Riley and Carl Kobelke were doorknocking nearly every weekend. I thank Henry Clarkson, Michael Dolecki, Sonia Dando, Dan and Anne-Marie Hill, and Tony Newton with his van, who was carting stuff around for us all—I see the member for Mount Lawley over there! I thank Joe Scarvaci who spent days and days, especially with my family, on pre-poll, especially up at Warwick, and if the member for Kingsley were here, she would very much talk about what pre-poll is like at Warwick and some of the interesting members the Liberal Party had out there. It was a very strange place.

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To the soon to be MLC Dan Caddy, and his son Patrick, thank you for helping set up on election night with my team, Mitchell Griffin, Hamza Ansari and Jeanette Evans. Thank you all for your support to all my volunteers.

To members of the union movement, I thank Tim Dawson and Steve Curtis from the Transport Workers Union; Mick Buchan and one of the other Catanias, Steve Catania and the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union for their great support; Ben Harris and Peter O’Keeffe from the Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Union; and Brad Gandy and Harry Burrows from the Australian Workers’ Union. Their support was invaluable and very much appreciated.

To my family, dad and mum, and my aunties and uncles manning pre-poll and Tuart Hill Primary School on the day, helping me with the odd house and garden clean-up because I was not able to, thank you for your support. To Lenda and our babies, Pepper, Pricillia, Churl and Pepe, thank you for putting up with me, but especially to Lenda; I think she had the unofficial title of “Campaign Overlord”. Obviously, I regard Lenda as the best campaigner in the state, as I think a lot of people in this room do, according to speeches this year and four years ago. Having her look over our campaign and make sure that I get in trouble, when I am meant to get in trouble for not doorknocking as much as I should have been, is always very helpful to me and I love her to bits, so thank you, Lenda.

Being a member of Parliament and a local member means you get to keep a list of achievements. For me, there is no point being a local member of Parliament unless you are always working for your local area. There are obviously other things you can do in this place in legislating and progressing larger issues that have broad impact upon our state, but for me, some of the local stuff is the most important and what I wake up and think about first and foremost almost every single day. I want to run through a few of those achievements.

I will first talk about Osborne Park Hospital. Especially with the new members on the western side of the Mitchell Freeway, there are many members in here who are in the Osborne Park Hospital catchment. In the last four years, we have expanded and refurbished the rehabilitation unit and centralised a therapy hub for rehabilitation services following a stroke, amputation or neurological condition. We have also built the new level 2A neonatal nursery for low to moderate-risk pregnancies. In the past, mums would have to be transferred to King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women if there was a problem. A larger portion of them can now stay at Osborne Park Hospital. There is a new maternity assessment unit with built-for-purpose assessment rooms and bays. Importantly—this gets forgotten a little bit, because of what happened with COVID—we introduced the urgent care clinic network, including four clinics that service Balcatta. This is important for getting people to urgent care clinics at local GPs and, hopefully, not going to emergency if they do not need to or can be looked at at that local level. I will always continue to fight for a better Osborne Park Hospital. In the future, I think Osborne Park Hospital will be absolutely critical to the healthcare needs of the rapidly expanding population of the northern suburbs, including the inner north. I expect that Osborne Park Hospital will be around for a long time to come and will continue to need upgrades and more services provided. That is something I continually annoy the Minister for Health about. I hope that the Department of Health has at least started planning what Osborne Park Hospital might look like into the future.

I mentioned Balcatta Senior High School before. When I was first elected and visited Balcatta Senior High School, it looked as though it was a school that if I were a dad, I would not want to send my kids to. It had had no money spent on it since it started in 1967. I think one building has been built since. I went to Servite College in Tuart Hill, because Tuart Hill Senior High School closed down before I could get there. Balcatta Senior High School looked worse than Servite College did when I entered year 8 in 1993. Servite has come leaps and bounds since then, but Balcatta was stagnant. I am very proud that only finishing touches are now needed to the \$50 million redevelopment of Balcatta Senior High School. Staff and students moved into the new multistorey building in term 4 last year, which includes a new sports hall; a proper sized basketball court, which they did not have before; a fitness centre; performing arts spaces; administration facilities; a new staff area; science laboratories and general classrooms and amenities. The works also included, as I said, new hard courts and a refurbishment of the original swimming pool. I am proud to say that as part of the redevelopment, the heritage-listed classrooms on Poincaré Street and areas around them have been refurbished for a new education support centre, which will cater for up to 50 students. The best thing about the redevelopment of Balcatta Senior High School is that enrolments had been relatively low for a very long time, but I am told that they have started to surge and have been growing each year since we began the project. That is terrific news. We still have some work to do. There are some traffic issues on Amelia Street and a balcony issue that we are trying to sort out, but I am very confident that the department is working on that as part of wrapping up the project, and we will get a good solution for the school and local residents.

My constituents who live in the suburb of Joondanna are in the intake area for Bob Hawke College. I obviously was there for the opening of stage 1 of that college. It is an exceptional high school, named after a great man. I know that Joondanna residents are very happy that Bob Hawke College will service their suburb.

We have built science labs at Takari, Westminster, Balcatta and Osborne Primary Schools. It is so important these days, with the world moving so quickly, that kids are learning, I will say, STEAM. I know the Minister for Culture and the Arts is not here, but we will add arts. The world is moving so quickly that some of the jobs that exist now

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will not exist in the future, and kids will need those skills to transition into those future jobs. I am really happy that the government is putting science labs into all our schools.

I am looking forward to working with the new member for Scarborough on the Stephenson Avenue extension. The former member for Scarborough supported this project as well, but unfortunately her government never funded it. If people drive along Scarborough Beach Road, they will see the works underway for stage 1 of the extension of Stephenson Avenue from Mitchell Freeway to Scarborough Beach Road. Members who have ever gone to IKEA, the Osborne Park industrial area or anywhere around the Innaloo shops or Event Cinemas will know that, especially at peak hour and on the weekends, the traffic congestion is unbelievable. That is because there is no permeability between streets. People have to use Ellen Stirling Boulevard, and there are a lot of traffic lights. The Stephenson Avenue extension has been a ghost road on the old UBD maps for 30, 40 or 50 years. We are finally putting it through. A local Osborne Park contractor, Densford Civil Pty Ltd, is delivering stage 1 of the works, which is being overseen by the City of Stirling, with federal and state funding. It will see Stephenson Avenue extended from Scarborough Beach Road to Sarich Court, including new connections to Ellen Stirling Boulevard, and eventually Howe Street and Oswald Street.

The second phase that Main Roads WA is currently working on will continue from Sarich Court and over Mitchell Freeway to join up with Cedric Street. That will include a new freeway interchange to replace the Cedric Street on and off-ramps. In conjunction with the Stephenson Avenue extension, the Stirling Bus Interchange will get a \$90 million upgrade, including transforming the existing 18-stand facility to a new 30-stand bus interchange, as well as construction of a new pedestrian access bridge between Stirling station and the southern car park. This will improve connectivity between the bus interchange and the station. Just so that members will know, the bus interchange at Stirling station is at capacity for buses. They cannot get another bus in there at peak times. This will have an enormous impact in getting cars off the roads and more people catching a bus to the train station, especially with the Yanchep Metronet project, with more trains coming through and getting more people in and out of the city.

Other achievements are that we introduced a 40-kilometre-an-hour speed zone for Main Street, Osborne Park. We delivered a \$1.5 million upgrade for a new playground, path network, drinking fountains, seating, barbecues and a skate park at Robinson Reserve in Tuart Hill. This is something that I drive past every day. I live a kilometre or so away, and again I am proud of it because every single day when I drive past, I see people using the facility, and more people walking around it on the path network. People who might be a bit unsure on their feet, senior citizens, mums and dads with prams, and disabled people, are now using the park, which is absolutely wonderful.

We have realigned the principal shared path along the eastern side of Mitchell Freeway, including a new cycling and pedestrian bridge over Scarborough Beach Road along Mitchell Freeway, and a new cycling tunnel under Hutton Street. Again, every morning when I come here, I come via the freeway, and I see people using that cycle path to get to Glendalough station or into the city. It is an important bit of infrastructure.

Something that I get thanked for a lot is that we funded the Boya Way–Erindale Road roundabout in Balcatta. That roundabout cost \$750 000. The former Liberal and Nationals WA government made a lot of noise about that but with no funding. The City of Stirling was not going to fund it. We funded it, and that intersection is now a lot safer.

We installed right-turn arrows at the Karrinyup Road–Grindleford Drive–San Remo Boulevard intersection in Stirling. That is near the new Woolies store at Roselea Shopping Centre, which was opened by the Minister for Transport late last year. It is important to be able to get people safely in and out of that new shopping centre.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr D.R. MICHAEL: We have provided black spot funding for new roundabouts at Powell Street–Waterloo Street in Joondanna and McDonald Street–Albert Street in Osborne Park, making our local roads safer.

Another big project is that we have widened Mitchell Freeway northbound from Hutton Street to Cedric Street and southbound from Cedric Street to Vincent Street. At this point, I thank Main Roads WA. I also thank the Minister for Transport, Rita Saffioti. The number of projects that she has underway and the amount of negotiation she has done with the federal government to get money that the former government could never get is absolutely unbelievable. Hopefully she will be Minister for Transport for a long time, but she will be remembered in this state for some of the major projects that she has delivered. That will have a lasting impact for all Western Australians.

We also made some commitments in the election. We have a fantastic program of local work. Some of the commitments we made were \$1 million towards Grindleford Reserve in Balcatta to upgrade the clubrooms for Balcatta Football Club, formerly Balcatta Etna Soccer Club. That is a massive club with 400 juniors. They had the tiniest club change rooms and clubrooms. They have pasta nights on Fridays for the mums, dads and kids, and they cannot fit them in, so we, in conjunction with the City of Stirling, will expand it, with some new lighting, and also again hopefully get some amenity for the park, such as a path network for local residents to use.

We have \$500 000 for a major upgrade to Rickman Delawney Reserve, just north of that. That will include community barbecues, water fountains and park bench seating, again in conjunction with the City of Stirling, to

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link up the Vasto Club, the northern suburbs model train engineers and Stirling Men's Shed, as well as Melvista, the aged-care provider, so that people can actually use the park. We will spend money to upgrade the facilities used by the Stirling Lions Soccer Club—I think it is now back to being called Stirling Macedonia Soccer Club—at Macedonia Park in Stirling. We have \$250 000 to upgrade lighting at Richard Guelfi Reserve, which is where, in terms of AFL, the Stirling Saints Football Club—it is over 100 years old; it used to be called the Osborne Park Amateurs a long time ago—and its junior club, the Stirling Saints Juniors, train. We need more lighting to get more men and women on the field to train during the weekends for match day. There is also some money for the Balcatta Bears Baseball Club to help it with a batting cage.

We will partner with the City of Stirling to provide upgrades for the Balcatta Cricket Club at Jones Paskin Reserve. We will provide funding towards stage 2 of the Robinson Reserve redevelopment for the change rooms and clubrooms, which are very old. That will benefit the Osborne Park Cricket Club, the Osborne Park Football Club and the Osborne Park Agricultural Society, which is over 110 years old and provides services to run the Osborne Park Show every year. We are improving accessibility at the Joondanna Community Food Garden, as well as some funding for the Westminster Community Food Garden. We will have some further funding to help the City of Stirling create a more vibrant Main Street in Osborne Park.

This is a big one. I thank the former member for Mirrabooka, Janine Freeman, on this one. We are about to start on a major upgrade of \$12.8 million for Westminster Primary School. The new facilities will include two teaching buildings, an administration block, playing courts and a car park. There will also be refurbishments to existing buildings to provide a high-quality learning environment across the school, and a very much needed upgrade to the administration area. This follows the junior primary and the primary schools amalgamating last year. In fact, it was the last school in the state to do so. That school in Westminster will now come on in leaps and bounds. I should also say that I am very excited that we are spending money at Balga TAFE, which is just across the road from Westminster Primary School, with a \$32 million overhaul of the campus, which was constructed in the 1970s. The new multistorey building will replace 22 transportable classrooms and provide training in building and construction, community services and general education.

I have mentioned science. There are two primary schools in the electorate of Balcatta that do not have a science lab now. We have a policy that we will put money toward Tuart Hill Primary School, my old school, and West Balcatta Primary School to get STEM resources into those schools. As members have heard this week, we are doubling the student capacity at Bob Hawke College with a \$57 million commitment.

Members for Mount Lawley and Mirrabooka, and other members as well, we have a million dollars on the table to plan for a Wanneroo Road activity corridor and for the future of a vibrant Wanneroo Road that will benefit local residents and businesses. Wanneroo Road carries a lot of traffic—it always will—and we need to make sure that the suburb of Wanneroo is liveable, has good public transport, and has good activity centres with some density and with some commercial and retail so that people do not have to travel too far to go to the shops or to a restaurant or small bar.

We also have \$3 million for an upgrade to the Main Street–Hutton Street–Royal Street intersection, which is a de facto freeway on-ramp, to make the intersection safer for pedestrians, motorists and cyclists. We also have additional funding for a roundabout at the Green Street–Scarborough Beach Road intersection near Main Street, which was worked on in conjunction with the member for Perth and will make that intersection a lot safer.

We are expanding local cyclepaths. As part of the Stephenson Avenue extension, the principal shared path will run from Telford Crescent to Civic Place and be delivered as probably an underpass at Stephenson Avenue. That will be very much welcomed by those residents who have a principal shared path out the front of their house that they have to reverse over every morning when they leave their homes. We will also be extending the principal shared path northwards along the freeway from Civic Place to Erindale Road, which will get more people using bikes and walking. After strong community support, we will be delivering an amenity wall along Reid Highway in Westminster to address noise pollution, illegal dumping and antisocial behaviour. The wall will replace what is currently a very small broken fence. With some federal funding, we will be upgrading the intersection of Morley Drive and Wanneroo Road with more north–south through lanes and an east–west bus lane for the 98 and 99 bus routes.

Lastly, in terms of commitments, \$100 million will be used to convert the Mitchell Freeway southbound to a smart freeway. I was a little sceptical about smart freeways, but everyone who lives south tells me that it is an absolutely wonderful thing that works very well, so I am looking forward to that. I have made many other little commitments as well that I will go through at another time. They support local clubs and local groups and are smaller projects that I feel are important.

I mentioned before the Transport Workers' Union of Australia. Last year, so many frontline workers in Western Australia stepped up. In our schools, cleaners, education assistants and teachers stepped up to deal with the COVID-19 crisis. The public health response from our teams in health—whether they be cleaners, doctors

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or nurses in hospitals—was stepped up and our public service gave the government great advice. The other day the Leader of the Liberal Party said, despite the year that we have just had, that he would definitely cut the public service. The public service stepped up and looked after us. I want to give credit to the public service—they were unbelievable. Before there were perspex screens, our retail workers had to deal with angry and concerned customers; it was an enormous job. We have made commitments to the transport industry and its workers. Truckies kept us going last year. They dealt with all the restrictions coming across the border and they kept distributing food to our grocery shops so that people did not panic about things running out. I am very happy that Labor has promised over \$14 million for truck driver amenities along key freight routes throughout the state.

I understand that the Minister for Transport is also working on amendments to the Owner-Drivers (Contracts and Disputes) Act that will assist contractors who transport loads using vehicles with a gross vehicle mass under 4 500 kilograms, such as couriers or pick-up delivery drivers. This will make sure that the rates are fair, contractors are paid on time and there is a legal avenue for them to pursue the Road Freight Transport Industry Tribunal if they find themselves in an unjust situation. We are working on a package to help the transport industry ensure that its workers look after their mental health. Across all these sectors last year, the workers—whether a school cleaner, a retail worker, a truck driver, a police officer, a nurse or a doctor—stepped up and we owe them all a debt of gratitude. A lot has been said about how people voted for a Labor government for the first time at the election, but a lot of thanks should go to all those workers across our state.

In my inaugural speech, I mentioned some bigger issues that I care about and in my last three or four minutes I will go through them. One issue is animal welfare, and all members will know my views on this, I am sure, if they have seen me sitting in the dining room not finding much to eat on the menu—chips and tomato sauce work well! The RSPCA put out a report recently that showed that Western Australia's animal welfare laws are some of the weakest in the country, and I know that Australia's laws generally are some of the weakest in the developed world. A conservative party in the United Kingdom has just announced major reforms to its Animal Welfare Act, which makes its animal welfare laws very progressive. I still remain disappointed that an industry that I do not think can be made humane, the live export industry, continues in Western Australia. I am concerned about the reporting of animal welfare issues in the racing industry. I know that through Minister Papalia and now, I am sure, with Minister Whitby, we will still try to achieve the best integrity we can in the racing industry. We must be vigilant on this matter. I am also looking for the puppy farming legislation to be passed in this Parliament. I cannot believe that the Liberal Party in particular voted against it last time; that shows how right-wing and non-mainstream it has become.

I remain sad that Australia is still not a republic. The idea that a kid attending Mount Lawley Primary School, Tuart Hill Primary School or Mirrabooka Primary School cannot be Australia's head of state is unfathomable to me. I do not accept any argument a monarchist has ever given me, and I never will.

I look forward to the Minister for Sport and Recreation working to make sure that our peak sporting bodies fund community sport better than they currently do, whether it be the West Australian Football Commission—we saw that excellent report last year—or the West Australian Football League making sure that money flows down to community football, or the WACA with cricket. It is going to have a great development program, but it needs to make sure that the money flows to district and community cricket to get juniors playing and to get blokes like me, and women, who are getting older with dodgy knees, out on the field playing every week and having a go for their mental and physical health. I look forward to our minister doing what he can in that area.

Finally, I will talk about what has happened in this country with climate change. We still have these crazy Institute of Public Affairs right-wing arguments that filter through the media—only some parts of the media, thankfully. I was very disappointed with this document, the federal budget, that came out on Tuesday night. The climate is hardly mentioned in it. Climate mitigation is not mentioned. Two things happened on Tuesday: the budget came out and, in the mail at home, I got my latest issue of *Mad* with Alfred E. Neuman on the cover painting a Hummer green. These two documents do as much for climate change as each other. It is so sad that Australia is so far behind the developed world in these things. We have the worst Prime Minister—second worst; I forgot about Tony Abbott. We have the second worst Prime Minister Australia has ever had and it is so sad what he is doing to our country.

MR S.A. MILLMAN (Mount Lawley — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.27 pm]: Congratulations, Mr Deputy Speaker, on your elevation to the role. It is a great privilege for me to follow on from the member for Balcatta, with whom I once again find myself in furious agreement on all the issues that he traverses. One of the great privileges of being the member for Mount Lawley is that my electorate is surrounded on all sides by Labor members of Parliament, much like I am in the chamber today, be they the member for Balcatta, who has been elevated to cabinet secretary, which I will come back to shortly; the member for Morley, who has been elevated to Minister for Commerce; the member for Perth, who has been elevated to the Minister for Housing; or my great friend and community advocate the member for Maylands, Lisa Baker. On all sides I am surrounded by Labor members. We share so much in common including a passion for our community. The member for Balcatta during his contribution to the

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Address-in-Reply, which picks up on some of those important themes that the Governor raised when he spoke to us, talked about the investment in Osborne Park Hospital, the congestion-busting, job-creating infrastructure project that the Minister for Transport, Rita Saffioti, is rolling out, and in particular the Morley Drive–Wanneroo Road intersection, which will have a significant beneficial impact on the people in his electorate and his community, in my electorate and in the member for Morley’s electorate. Being able to work collaboratively and constructively with fellow like-minded local members of Parliament is fantastic. Added to that, the magnificent investment into Osborne Park Hospital that this government is making will benefit not only all of those members from 2017 to 2021 who advocated so hard for it, such as me and the members for Balcatta, Kingsley and Mirrabooka, but also the current members for Carine, Scarborough and Churchlands. This investment will deliver for the whole of our community.

On that point, I just want to mention that one of the great challenges of following a contribution by the member for Balcatta is that he speaks so persuasively and passionately—he also names half of my volunteers! It is a function of somebody who has dedicated two decades of his four decades of life to the service of his local community, growing up in Tuart Hill, going to Tuart Hill Primary School and going on to serve the City of Stirling as one of the youngest-ever elected councillors and deputy mayors. It is to his great credit that he continues to advocate so strongly, stridently and passionately on behalf of his community. It is no surprise that he has been elevated to the role of cabinet secretary, and I congratulate you for that, member. The other thing you have done is pinch the structure of my contribution—it was brilliant!—so I am going to try to jiggle mine around a bit.

I am making this contribution today in response to the Governor’s speech opening the forty-first Parliament, but it would be remiss of me not to reflect on how our community rallied together during the course of the fortieth Parliament. In that regard, I want to divide my contribution into two parts. There will be a pre-COVID part and a COVID part.

When I think about the pre-COVID part, I reflect on the myriad promises we made in the lead-up to the 2017 election—promises to keep Western Power in public ownership, promises not to do dirty deals with One Nation and promises to deliver for our community. In Mount Lawley, those promises included \$4 million for a new science and technology building at Mount Lawley Senior High School. There was \$11.6 million for a new mental health emergency centre at Royal Perth Hospital, as well as more than \$20 million to refurbish the intensive care unit at Royal Perth Hospital. These were our investments in health. In addition to these promises, all of which we delivered, we made a number of significant promises to all our local public primary schools, and they were all delivered and all those investments were made. In particular, there was the \$400 000 contribution to Yokine Primary School, a school very similar to Tuart Hill Primary School. It was built in the 1950s and probably had not had a significant amount of expenditure contributed to it since it was built. There is a new administration block there, which generated local economic activity and local jobs for painters, electricians and plasterers who came in to do that work and fit-out. That is to say nothing of the things we delivered for schools that did not even form part of our election commitments, such as the delivery of the science lab at Sutherland Dianella Primary School. My electorate, like the member for Balcatta’s, has seen those science labs roll out in primary schools across the neighbourhood, which, as the member says, is incredibly important when we look towards what the jobs of the future will be. I will come back to this theme of jobs later.

It was not just about delivering our election commitments and it was not just about injecting money into the economy in order to keep it stimulated and growing; we did other things as well. We passed some important landmark legislation, legislation of which I am particularly proud. We passed legislation to lift the statute of limitations for victims of historical child sexual abuse, which has now opened the door for those people to seek and receive compensation for the suffering they received at the hands of their abusers. I have watched in the media and the courts that justice is being delivered. That was incredibly important. That was a legislative amendment that could be delivered only by a McGowan Labor government, steered through this place by the Attorney General. We passed legislation to ensure no body, no parole. We passed legislation to modernise and standardise our work health and safety regime. This is something, Deputy Speaker, that you are passionate about, and that you mentioned specifically in your first speech to this place in 2017. We have standardised that legislation and introduced industrial manslaughter laws, and that speaks volumes to the work that everyone in this chamber put in to get that legislation passed. We introduced legislation in the midst of a global pandemic. It is worth remembering that this McGowan Labor government and Minister Roger Cook passed legislation to apply the dividend from our future fund specifically for medical research. This is vitally important legislation. Medical research is now a priority of our future fund. In addition to all that, in a move that speaks volumes to the compassion and egalitarianism of the Labor government to the sense that people ought to have the right to die with dignity, we tackled the very difficult, complicated and personal issue of voluntary assisted dying, and we passed that legislation as well. This was all before the onset of the COVID pandemic.

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I have heard members opposite—or members in the corner!—talk about the fact that this last election was a COVID election, and I hope they continue to make that mistake, because when I was speaking to people in my community, it was apparent that they were grateful for the fact that we had achieved all those things before the COVID pandemic hit. I do not understand the hypothesis that those members put forward that simply being a leader in a democratic country during COVID automatically guarantees re-election. For example, Donald Trump and his hyper-individualistic, hyper-selfish, hyper-neoliberal response to the COVID pandemic in the United States stands in stark contrast to the leadership we had from the McGowan Labor government—from the diligence and discipline that it demonstrated to the commitment it made to the people of the whole community in making decisions and then standing by those decisions. Whenever I go anywhere in Mount Lawley people say to me, “It is not just that the Premier kept us safe, it is not just that he kept COVID out of WA, it is when he said something, he actually did it, and he could not be bullied, harassed or harangued out of that position despite the best efforts of the Liberal Party, the Nationals WA and Clive Palmer.” We stuck to our guns. The Premier, the McGowan Labor government and the whole Labor team were rewarded by voters on 13 March for that commitment and leadership. It is an unsophisticated, un-nuanced and unintelligent response from conservative parties, which have been reduced to a rump, simply to say that the McGowan Labor government won this election because of COVID. I hope they stick with that mistake, because if they stick with that line, in 2025 they will still not have learnt that lesson and will be faced with a similar predicament to the one they find themselves in today.

The other great attribute of the McGowan Labor government’s response to the COVID pandemic is that it provided the space, the environment, in which we could really see those egalitarian and social democratic values that are so important to the Australian people. It provided the space for those values to come to the fore, and I saw this in particular in Mount Lawley. The community’s response to COVID was driven by all of us working together and supporting one another. The ideas of solidarity that the member for Mirrabooka talked about in her speech are not unique to the union movement; they permeate throughout Australian society. One of the great privileges of representing my city is that it is a close-knit community. Throughout the pandemic I was moved by the capacity of the community to come together and help support one another. Facebook posts popped up, locals supported local businesses and people popped into the electorate office with contributions to local food hampers that we would run down to Foodbank. Margaret Thatcher once famously said that there is no such thing as society, and she could not have been more wrong. The response of our community to the COVID pandemic demonstrates just how strong we are as a community.

In the time I have, I want to turn to my feelings of optimism, because despite delays in the federal government’s “stroll-out” of the vaccine, I am optimistic for what the future holds. I can see in other nations around the world whose vaccination program has continued apace that it has had a material beneficial impact to the community. Once we catch up and our vaccine program is rolled out, we will be so much the better.

The other concern I have about the way the federal government has responded to the COVID pandemic is that it has completely abrogated its responsibilities under the commonwealth Constitution to deal with quarantine. It makes me so scared to say it, but one of the problems I have with this is that this is not the last time we will see a global pandemic. This is not the first global pandemic and it will not be the last. In the globalised international world that we live in, quarantine may have a significant role to play in the future. Commonwealth government investment in appropriate quarantine facilities, such as Howard Springs in the Northern Territory, is worthwhile, because those facilities will inevitably need to be used in the future. For the commonwealth government to abrogate its responsibility and pass that obligation on to the state governments to then have to use hotels that were never meant to serve this purpose displays a complete lack of leadership. It speaks volumes to the contrast between Scott Morrison and Mark McGowan.

I hope that the two issues of quarantine and vaccination will be resolved. Once they are resolved, I know that, as a community, we will be able to come through the COVID-19 pandemic, and, once we do, we will bounce back stronger in Mount Lawley. As well as the \$5.5 billion economic stimulus package that was introduced by the former Treasurer, the former member for Victoria Park, Hon Ben Wyatt, last year, in addition to that, as the Premier said today in his brief ministerial statement, we have invested \$28.9 billion in infrastructure to support our economic recovery and create jobs. I will keep returning to the issue of jobs, but let me tell members about where some of that money is going in the Mount Lawley electorate. There will be significant and much-needed investment into Mount Lawley Senior High School. On top of the \$4 million we spent over the last term of government for the new STEM building, another \$15 million has been allocated for the refurbishment, renovation and construction of new classrooms. In an era when xenophobia and hatred is on the rise, I am incredibly pleased that this government is committing \$6 million towards the refurbishment of the Jewish community centre in Yokine. I think this is an incredibly important contribution, because a Holocaust memorial will be included in that centre. As I said in my very first speech in this place, that will help remind us what happens when politicians are driven by hate and fear and divide the community. That is a fantastic \$6 million investment towards a Holocaust memorial.

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There is also a significant investment in health and jobs. I want to highlight a couple of health initiatives. In addition to all the money that has been spent on Royal Perth Hospital, as I mentioned previously, I am also incredibly proud that over the term of the last Parliament, it was this government that finally opened Perth Children's Hospital. As part of the continued revitalisation of the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre and the continued upgrade of medical and health infrastructure in Western Australia, there is a \$1.8 billion investment in a new women's and babies' hospital at the QEII site, which I think is an incredibly important investment for the benefit of the entire community. This investment will not only make sure that we continue to deliver a world-class health system to the citizens of Western Australia, but also, in the interim, create hundreds if not thousands of local construction jobs and stimulate the local economy in the seat of Nedlands and in the Perth metropolitan area more broadly. It is a testament to this government that its strong financial management has placed it in a position in which it is able to deliver that sort of investment into our health service. But it is not just about building the physical and infrastructural capacity of our health system; it is also about building the human capacity. I have said in this place before and I will say again that jobs in health are the jobs of the future. Speaking volumes to that is this government's promise to recruit another 600 new nurses over the next couple of years. Nursing is an incredibly important profession and endeavour and it plays a key role in the delivery of a caring and compassionate health system in our community. Yesterday was International Nurses Day. I acknowledge the contribution of all nurses, doctors and allied health professionals. As mentioned by the member for Balcatta in his contribution, they played such an important role in keeping our community safe during the COVID pandemic. Adding to their number will only benefit the state of Western Australia even more.

I will speak more about health and jobs. Members will forgive me; I wanted to express my gratitude to the Premier, Mark McGowan, and Deputy Premier, Roger Cook. I am extremely grateful to have been appointed as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Premier. It is fair to say that one of the great attributes of the McGowan government and one that, as I mentioned previously, has been widely recognised by the people I speak to in Mount Lawley is leadership. That leadership is provided by the Premier but buttressed by a capable and enthusiastic cabinet. It is a testament to the vision of the Premier that the Minister for Health is also the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade; Science; Medical Research.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: It is clear that diversifying the economy is and has been a key priority of the McGowan government since our election in 2017. The last 12 months more than any other time in history has demonstrated quite clearly that we as a community need to be at the cutting edge of health and medical research. It is the only way that we can continue to deliver a world-class health system that puts patients first. It will also help to generate the permanent highly paid, highly skilled jobs of the future. It goes without saying but I will say it anyway, as I have said it before: the jobs in our health and caring industries cannot be outsourced, offshored or automated. These are jobs that will be with us forever. The two portfolio priorities of jobs and health are of vital importance to the people of Mount Lawley and it is a great honour to be able to work with the minister in these areas.

I have talked about jobs and the incredible work of the McGowan Labor government across the board, and I talked before about the \$28.9 billion infrastructure investment that is being made. There is so much construction work going on in the fields of residential construction, commercial and civil construction, transport and infrastructure. Where are we going to find all the workers? The only sensible, proportionate and reasonable response is to do what this government has done and freeze TAFE fees. That will encourage people to undergo the necessary training in order to become fully participating members of our workforce. It speaks to the fact that this is a cohesive government that is united in its vision that we have a Minister for Education and Training who is prioritising the education and training that will be required to provide the jobs that the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade is emphasising in order to work on projects initiated by the Ministers for Police, Housing and Transport to make sure that there is a pipeline of works that continues to serve the people of Western Australia. We have seen the benefits of that. I look at the Mt Lawley campus of North Metropolitan TAFE and I see firsthand the incredible benefits that that delivers.

I want to finish on another area that members here will know I am passionate about. The member for Landsdale alluded to the work that we continue to need to do. I think now of one of my areas of passion, and that is justice. Obviously, the Address-in-Reply is in response to the Governor's speech. In that speech, the Governor spoke about this government's commitment to address one particular injustice that I am passionate about, and that is the injustice for victims of asbestos-related diseases. I am incredibly pleased and proud to be standing here today as part of a government that is committed to removing once and for all damages for victims of asbestos-related diseases and introducing provisional damages. I will not speak about this issue today—I have spoken about this issue previously—but I warn members that I am very excited about the prospect of making a contribution when that bill comes on for debate.

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This year also marks the thirtieth anniversary of the report being handed down by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. There are recommendations in that report that need to be implemented. We have continued the work of implementing the recommendations of that royal commission, and I think about the work of the Attorney General last year on the custody notification scheme and the fines enforcement legislation. Again, I am very proud of what we achieved in the fortieth Parliament and I am optimistic about what we can do in the forty-first Parliament to address that historic injustice. I think it is an area in which, as the member for Balcatta said, more work needs to be done.

We need to look at funding for our community legal centres, we need to emphasise the importance of diversionary programs in our justice system and we need to sensibly and conclusively tackle the issue of raising the age of criminal responsibility. My two boys are eight and six years old. My son Willis will turn nine in July. It is incomprehensible to me that the age of criminal responsibility for children is 10 years old. This came up in the fortieth Parliament and it should come up again in the forty-first Parliament. We should continue discussing that, because if people become aware of that, it is unconscionable for it to persist. We need to look seriously at fixing that.

I want to congratulate all the new members. I sat here last week and listened to the inaugural speeches of all the new members who have been elected. I was so impressed. I was flabbergasted. I thought the contributions that were made were incredible. Their contributions spoke to the passion and compassion, the intellect and ability, and the endeavour and desire of these people to represent their communities and make a difference. I look around and there are so many people here—we bat so deep on this side of the house! The extent of talent that we have is unbelievable. Look at the member for Kimberley. I listened to the contribution that she made. I am rapt to have her here. I used to sit with the former member for Kimberley, Josie Farrer, in the hallway behind the Speaker's gallery and we would talk about native title, Aboriginal access to justice, and Aboriginal participation in the political process. How good is it that we have Divina as the new member for Kimberley. The new member for Mirrabooka is a great friend of mine and a staunch advocate for workers. I think about the contribution of her predecessor, the former member for Mirrabooka, who was a terrific advocate for not only workers, but also migrants and all of her community. I have had people come up to me subsequently and say, "We want to make sure we can keep Janine Freeman involved in these conversations because she has so much to contribute."

I want to thank the three wise men of Cockburn, Albany and Collie—Preston, who I am glad to see have been replaced by two wise women and one wise man. I congratulate the member for Cockburn for taking that well-trodden path of working as an industrial lawyer at Slater and Gordon and then Eureka Lawyers before becoming a member for Parliament—more credit to him.

Member for Victoria Park, I loved your contribution. You have, as you say, very big shoes to fill. I think about the contribution made by Hon Ben Wyatt and the incredibly difficult job he had. People have commented that the federal budget that was handed down was a Keynesian budget, because it had so much spending in it, yet Ben Wyatt was able to navigate getting the finances under control and re-establishing a sound foundation for our state's economy in a way that continued to speak to and deliver fundamental Labor values and election commitments. Ben was an outstanding Treasurer and outstanding member of this Parliament who made an outstanding contribution, and I wish him all the best for the future.

A couple of members were elected to formerly Liberal-held seats. I will probably attract the ire of some on my side as I pay compliments to some of those who have departed. I am ecstatic to see the new member for Hillarys, but before I sit down, I must say that I am incredibly grateful to the former member for Hillarys. I have a large Greek community in my seat of Mount Lawley. If the member for Hillarys took one thing passionately, it was his Greek heritage. Whenever we went to Greek community events, he was always very accommodating and made sure I was able to fully participate in that community, so I am incredibly grateful to him for that.

We have a new member for South Perth. I had the great privilege of serving on the Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices with the former member for South Perth. The member for Morley was the chair. As all members will know, the former member for South Perth is passionate about three things—South Perth, sport and horseracing. The job that he did as a contributor to the Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices was like nothing I would have expected or had seen from him. He was thoughtful, focused and empathetic. He listened to the stories of witnesses as they came forward. He wrestled in his mind with all the difficult issues and he did it with such good grace, diligence and dedication that his retirement from this place cannot go unremarked upon.

My comments about the former member for Bateman might surprise some people. He was the deputy chair of the Public Accounts Committee, and worked on that committee with the new Minister for Sport and Recreation, me and the member for Bicton, who will now become the chair of the Public Accounts Committee. Every one of our reports over the course of the entire fortieth Parliament, which traversed issues such as the West Australian Football Commission, government procurement, and the construction of Perth Children's Hospital with asbestos in the

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ceiling and lead in the water, was a unanimous report. That speaks to the capacity of the former member for Bateman to act in the interests of his community.

Mr D.J. Kelly: The travesty is he was never the leader of the Liberal Party.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: It is interesting that the minister should say that. One of the great things exposed by the Liberal Party's train wreck of a press conference on costings two days before the election was that when the member for Bateman walked out the door, all of that party's economic and financial expertise walked out the door with him, and it was left with nothing. It speaks even further to that point that two out of the three stooges are no longer with us! I should raise the tone in my contribution in the few minutes I have left.

I am incredibly pleased to see the new member for Warren–Blackwood. The previous member for Warren–Blackwood gave one of the most moving contributions to debate I have ever heard in this chamber. We were debating the closure of the Wittenoom township, long after the mine was closed, the town de-gazetted and most of the people had moved out. Terry Redman said this —

In closing, I want to talk a bit about that risk. A lot of people have been exposed to mesothelioma or asbestosis. I, sadly, lost a brother to the disease just over four years ago. It was terribly sad. The guy was an accountant. How did he get this disease? But it happens. We have to make every effort to make sure it does not happen again. These steps are terribly important and I absolutely support the government in this space. This stuff is aggressive. My brother was diagnosed on 10 March 2014 and he died on 27 November. How the hell does that happen? I remember going to the place where everyone looked at blue asbestos and pulled it apart. I remember having a rock collection that had the bloody stuff in it. It can touch anybody. One does not have to be a miner to be exposed to it, as the member for Nedlands highlighted. Exposure can happen on a range of fronts; for example, it has affected the people who worked with brake shoes years ago. We did a bit of building and that is as close as we can come to understanding where my brother might have been exposed to asbestos. It sits there, latent, for a long period, and it plays out as it does.

I remember sitting in the chamber riveted by what Terry Redman was saying. His intellectual capacity, his compassion and his empathy was on clear display, and I want to thank him for his contribution as well.

In the time I have left, I want to thank two members of the Legislative Council, Hon Colin Holt—see above comments made about the member for South Perth—for his contribution to the Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices, and because this is a multi-partisan expression of gratitude on my part, I mention Hon Tim Clifford, who is a friend of mine who served one term as a Greens MLC. He has been a great servant to the local community.

I have run out of time and I still have a massive list of thankyou's, which I will have to save for another occasion.

MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean — Minister for Water) [12.57 pm]: In the couple of minutes I have, I want to do two things. Firstly, it is great to have been re-elected as the member for Bassendean. The campaign for Bassendean was not as vigorous as it was for some other seats in this chamber, but I did have a dedicated group of volunteers. The Bassendean branch of the Labor Party is fantastic. I want to particularly thank Jan Mason, Anthea Mathews, Pam Day, Dorothy Griggs, Carol Seidel, Lorna Harper and Ann Giles in particular for being a loyal band of campaign workers. They were very good and excelled at things as varied as train stations and wobble boarding, in particular. I had people comment to me that I had the oldest group of wobble boarders they had ever seen! I do not think Pam Day will be offended when I inform the house that she recently turned 90, and to see her out by the side of the road wobble boarding was a sight to behold.

Mr D.A. Templeman: That's a health and safety issue!

Mr D.J. KELLY: Member for Mandurah, just listen! I had to schedule my wobble boarding on a Wednesday because that was the day that Pam did not start the day by swimming a kilometre. She is a formidable woman, and I wanted to thank her. I am not sure quite how old Dorothy Griggs is but she is an absolutely fantastic woman. Most of her working life was as the skipper of a prawn trawler. She took her children onboard with her as a young mother. She is an absolute formidable and very modern woman. She has recently bought herself an electric vehicle like mine.

This was a fabulous group of volunteers. I cannot mention my volunteers in Bassendean without giving a special mention to Carol Seidel. Many people in this chamber will know Carol, who is an absolute force of nature. If anyone has ever been asked by Carol to contribute to a fundraiser or buy a raffle ticket, they will know that the best thing to do is to succumb and hand over your cash! I could not be the member for Bassendean without the absolutely outstanding work that is done by that group of largely women.

The other thing I will do is mention John Lawrence, who recently was awarded \$1.3 million for sexual abuse that was inflicted upon him by the Christian Brothers at Clontarf and Castledare. That award was made last year by Judge Mark Herron. It was the largest judgement in Australia up to that point and was made possible only by us

Extract from *Hansard*

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changing the laws, which we did in the first term of the McGowan government. This month, that award was increased by about \$140 000 because the Court of Appeal determined that the calculation of interest was incorrect. That was in response to the Christian Brothers appealing the decision, seeking to have the payment of interest knocked down. The Christian Brothers never cease to amaze me at how heartless they are in dealing with this matter. It is well time that the Archbishop of Perth, Tim Costelloe, got rid of the Christian Brothers in this diocese. The Catholic Church would be well served by the Christian Brothers being disbanded and their assets distributed to the victims of abuse—of whom there are many. It is about time that the Archbishop of Perth stood up, showed leadership and did the right thing.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 628.]

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm