

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE COMMISSION AMENDMENT BILL 2021

Second Reading

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Parliamentary Secretary) [3.00 pm]: Deputy Speaker, before I start my contribution, may I be granted a short extension, please.

[Member's time extended.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Just hold on two seconds, member, while the chamber settles down.

Ms S.E. WINTON: Before the Minister for Mines and Petroleum leaves the chamber, I want to say that I have been doing a little research on the suggestion he made prior to members' statements that last year the Canning Show was the biggest show outside the Perth Royal Show, and he also claimed it was the oldest show.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Started in 1892!

Ms S.E. WINTON: Perhaps the minister needs to verify his information, because based on my research, last year's Canning Show was its 110th—I do not know what year that equates to—whereas, last year's Wanneroo Agricultural Show was its 111th.

Mr W.J. Johnston: At the start, in the 1880s, it was not run every year and it was not run every year during wars. So it started in 1892 as a flower show, and that is when it dates from. And the Canning agricultural society owns the showgrounds, and you use council facilities.

Ms S.E. WINTON: On that basis, I might accept that Canning has the oldest show.

Ms R. Saffioti: Do not give up yet!

Ms S.E. WINTON: But in terms of the number of people who came along to the show, the minister mentioned that 15 000 people came along to the Canning Show last year. I have it on very good authority that over 22 000 people attended the Wanneroo Show, including the Premier and many ministers. I believe the Minister for Agriculture and Food has attended every year since she became agriculture minister. Again, I remind members that this year's show will be bigger and better than ever. It will be held on 19 and 20 November. Come along and have some fun! The fireworks are spectacular, particularly on Friday night.

Before I move on from the agricultural show, I want to give a particular shout-out to current president Michael Aspinall, treasurer Bev Errington, secretary Jan Hacon, and all the committee members and volunteers in the Wanneroo community who do an incredible job in organising the most important and biggest event in Wanneroo. I know that last year, Michael Aspinall, the president, found it a particularly challenging time to keep the hope of hosting the show alive, given COVID. But he kept the show alive and, as a result, we had 22 000 people attend the Wanneroo Show. It is bigger than the Canning Show and the biggest show outside of the Perth Royal Show.

I want to touch briefly on agriculture in Wanneroo. Wanneroo has a proud agricultural history. Members have heard me mention many times that Wanneroo plays a big part in our state's agricultural output. It was interesting to hear from the member for Warren–Blackwood about some of the fantastic produce coming out of her electorate and the quantities involved and the value-adding that is happening in that area. I recall the blackberry nip, in particular. I will tell members what is coming out of Wanneroo. Wanneroo is known for its strawberries, in particular, and produces over 35 per cent of the state's strawberries. Thanks to the Trandos family and their extraordinary operation in Wanneroo, 68 per cent of the state's sweetcorn comes from there. Wanneroo produces 20 per cent of Western Australia's capsicums, 20 per cent of its beans, 22 per cent of its cabbages and, of course, it produces a fair whack of the state's tomatoes. Wanneroo has over 100 growers, varying in size from huge operations like that of the Trandos family, who run farms in not only Wanneroo but also Gingin and Broome to provide produce year-round, to small market gardens, perhaps on five acres, that produce niche products such as herbs and micro herbs. Over 100 growers situated in Wanneroo employ over 1 000 people. It is incredible to think that the gross value of production in Wanneroo accounts for about \$120 million or about 30 per cent of the total produced in the Perth region. Wanneroo does very well.

I want to give a brief update on what is happening in Wanneroo. Members would know that when we came to government in 2017, growers were faced with a fair bit of uncertainty. The former government had four or five different agriculture ministers, but I think it was Dean Nalder who made the announcement, without any consultation, that there would be a 25 per cent cut to the water allocation in Wanneroo. This caused great concern amongst growers in Wanneroo, did nothing to help provide certainty of tenure of the water resource, and created more problems with planning issues, given urban encroachment in that area. In 2017, the new Labor government committed to convene a task force to look at these issues to provide long-term planning for water certainty for those growers.

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One of the outcomes of that task force was that Dave Kelly, Minister for Water, and Hon Alannah MacTiernan, Minister for Agriculture and Food, announced that a 10 per cent cut in growers' water allocations would come into force in 2028. As members could imagine, that did not go down too well with growers, but it was a necessary decision.

I noticed that the member for Swan Hills talked a lot about climate change in her contribution to the debate on this bill. We all know that climate change is having an impact. We have a drying climate and water is a key issue in Wanneroo. Water licences are oversubscribed and we had to make the tough decision to decrease water licences by 10 per cent in 2028. The whole purpose of making that announcement a couple of years ago was to allow growers time to transition and for the government to support growers so they could accommodate that 10 per cent cut by encouraging them in further efficiency measures.

In that regard, as part of my 2021 election commitments, the government is investing \$750 000 in Wanneroo, with \$600 000 in particular to assist growers in managing the drying climate. Growers will be able to apply for grants of up to \$30 000 to install technology to improve their water systems and increase their water efficiency. Not all growers are able to access that grant straightaway because they do not know what they do not know, so part of this \$600 000 investment will include \$5 000 grants so that growers can engage professionals to come out to their farms to assist them to make some decisions about what kind of efficiency technology might serve their farms. I look forward to that grant process being rolled out, and I urge farmers to work with the government in supporting them to make sure they are efficient in their water use.

I also want to mention the ongoing work the government is doing with the City of Wanneroo to resolve some planning issues there. Lots of members—I am sure the Minister for Mines and Petroleum, who talked about his electorate of Cannington, and the member for Balcatta—would know that quite often, over time, traditional market garden areas have urbanisation pressures and that market gardeners might want to pack up, cash in their properties as superannuation, and move away. We have dual problems of growers who need more certainty and need to drive efficiencies, but there is no doubt that some growers, depending on their family circumstances et cetera, actually just want to pack up and have a good planning outcome so that they can capitalise their assets. We are working through that with the City of Wanneroo and the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage. Of course, when I mention the City of Wanneroo, members, we have a great mayor up there. Tracey Roberts is a fantastic mayor.

Ms M.M. Quirk: Even federal member for Pearce!

Ms S.E. WINTON: Absolutely. I cannot tell members how excited I was at the announcement in the paper today that the Mayor of Wanneroo, Tracey Roberts, has been preselected by the Labor Party—isn't Labor good at picking well-connected local candidates to run for state and federal seats! Labor is good at doing that, and we will not find someone much better than Tracey Roberts in terms of being connected to her community, having served at the local council level since, I think, 2009 and having been mayor since 2011. I have had a lot to do with the Mayor of Wanneroo and I can tell members that there are not many people who work harder than she does out in the community or who better know their community's needs. I think she would be a fantastic voice for Pearce in the federal sphere, and I look forward to the opportunity to work with her, because, let me tell members, she also knows the issues of water certainty that plague north Wanneroo. So far, with all the advocacy that the state government has tried to pursue, it has not been able to get any significant funding out of the federal government to support growers and agriculture in Wanneroo. I am hoping that through Tracey's advocacy, we might actually get a little bit more attention than we have been getting from the coalition government.

I want to conclude by saying as part of this debate that it has been fantastic to hear people such as the members for Geraldton, Albany and Warren—Blackwood talk with such great passion about their electorates and, in particular, the agricultural pursuits that are happening in those electorates. In my first four years in Parliament, I never heard those kinds of industries being spoken about with such passion, and I think it is a great reflection of how fantastic the Labor government is in representing regional Western Australia, where, of course, a lot of our agricultural production happens.

I want to finally say that a lot of that is partly due to our fantastic Minister for Regional Development; Agriculture and Food, Hon Alannah MacTiernan, who has worked the regions. She has been there, doing the business, working with these wonderful regional advocates, and I look forward to what is in store for the next three years.

MR S.A. MILLMAN (Mount Lawley — Parliamentary Secretary) [3.13 pm]: I rise to make a brief contribution to this debate on the Agricultural Produce Commission Amendment Bill 2021. I would like to start where the member for Wanneroo left off. We talk about previous agricultural ministers for Western Australia, and I do not think anyone has ever been quite as accomplished, famous or forceful as the current Minister for Agriculture and Food. It is through her strength, willpower and advocacy that she is making sure that agriculture is well represented in the Parliament of Western Australia. She is a great woman advocating passionately for something that she believes in.

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As I rise to speak, I am conscious of the fact that I am the first male member on the Labor benches to speak in support of this bill.

Mr D.A. Templeman: A dying breed!

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: A dying breed! Our opponents may be pale, male and stale, but our successors are all coming after us! I think about the areas that they represent: regional areas, like the member for Warren–Blackwood; important country towns, like Albany and Geraldton, and the members for both have spoken; and we have had members on the peri-urban fringe like the member for Wanneroo, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier, and the member for Swan Hills, parliamentary secretary to the minister who has carriage of the bill in this place. I do not think it can ever be alleged that the Labor Party will not stick up for the regions.

Mr P.J. Rundle: Except when it comes to electoral reform!

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: I am the member for Mount Lawley, and I speak in support of this legislation. I join my voice to all those other voices who have spoken so articulately and passionately, as the member for Wanneroo has said, who really genuinely want to stand up and represent their communities. The reason I am relaxed about any proposals for electoral reform, member for Roe, is that I know that if we continue to elect Labor members to this chamber, those areas will be more than adequately represented. The only risk for regional people is if they go back to electing hopeless members who faced the judgement of the community at the last election who are all out on their ear, replaced by the women who have stood up and made passionate arguments in support of this legislation—thoughtful contributions that form part of the debate in this place. This debate is centred around another landmark McGowan government initiative. This McGowan government, elected in 2017 and re-elected in 2021, has always had jobs as its number one focus. In order to encourage and promote jobs growth and new opportunities, we need to make sure that we support our agricultural industries, we need to make sure that we support all our industries, but in particular we have an obligation as a responsible Parliament to make sure that our legislative framework, the regulatory framework that governs these industries, is modern and up-to-date.

When we look at the neglect that this particular area has suffered under years of blue versus green infighting during the period of the last government as the National Party and the Liberal Party could not figure out what reforms they were going to put in place, I say thank goodness we have active representatives from the country towns and regions, and thank goodness we have a minister like Hon Alannah MacTiernan taking up this necessary legislative reform, because this will provide certainty and opportunity for people in our agricultural industry.

One thing that we have all been confronted with over the past 18 months is the COVID pandemic, and the way in which we rebuild our economy after the COVID pandemic has abated is going to be very important. We have known and always articulated that there is a heavy reliance in Western Australia on the mining sector. The mining sector will always play an incredibly significant part in the economy and prosperity of Western Australia, but we also know that it is incumbent on us to diversify our economy. By putting an emphasis on supporting our agricultural producers, we can achieve just that. One of the real difficulties that has arisen as a result of the COVID pandemic is that our reliance on the mining sector has in fact increased in recent times, so the urgency of the task that we are now confronted with in reforming and diversifying our economy is even more acute. One way that we can promote our agricultural industries, our primary producers and our world-leading products is by encouraging export markets. We should encourage those world-class, gold-standard producers to take their products and get them into those lucrative export markets. The McGowan Labor government is doing that through its new plans for the Invest and Trade WA office, which will consist of four dedicated trade commissioners located in key export markets—north-east Asia, the Association of South-East Asian Nations, greater China, and India and the gulf—to promote Western Australian products to these markets. These new commissioners are all in place and ready to go, and they cannot wait to get out into those export markets so that they can start promoting Western Australian products and goods and services to those markets. They are ready to go, but before they leave to go offshore to their postings, these four trade commissioners, together with representatives from the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation, last week undertook a familiarisation tour of the south west and the great southern, just to do a deep dive into what is going on in those regions to gain a proper understanding so that when they get out into those markets in Tokyo, Singapore, Mumbai and Shanghai, they will be well-versed in the work that is being done by some of our world-class producers in Western Australia.

Firstly, can I just thank the four trade commissioners whom I was able to join last week on the familiarisation tour: Ms Juan Lu, who will be our investment and trade commissioner in China; Ms Krista Dunstan, who will be our investment and trade commissioner for the Association of South-East Asian Nations; Ms Nicole Fasana, who will be our investment and trade commissioner in north-east Asia—Japan and Korea; and Mr Chris Bandy, who will be our investment and trade commissioner in India and the gulf. Together with Fiona Goss, who is the principal trade consultant for the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, and representatives from Invest and Trade WA—acting deputy director general, Simone Spencer, and Kristian Dawson—we were able to

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undertake a familiarisation tour last week. As part of that tour, we visited some of the incredible Western Australian producers such as avocado producer Jasper Farms. Western Australia produces 39 per cent of the national avocado crop. Jasper Farms contributes significantly to that figure, with 360 hectares of land under cultivation. Jasper Farms not only does a terrific job in growing this product for the Western Australian, Australian and international markets, but also provides jobs for Pacific Islanders whose remittances help to keep the economies of those islands afloat as they struggle with the COVID-19 pandemic and the undermining of their tourism sectors.

We visited Truffle Hill in Manjimup, an incredible world-leading producer of truffles, and spoke with its managing director, Michael Lowe. We also visited Tall Timbers in Manjimup. In fact, one of the great visits that we undertook was in Katanning, the member for Roe's electorate, where we spoke to people at an organisation called Moojepin Foods. One of the real problems that we face as an agricultural community in Western Australia is increasing salinity. The guys at Moojepin are so energetic and enthusiastic and they know exactly what is required to tackle the issue of salinity. We spoke to a farmer there who is so enthusiastic, energetic and passionate about tackling salinity in the wheatbelt. His name is David Thompson. He had set aside his farm as a test site for saltbush and other saline-intensive crops to reduce the salinity in the soil. It is inspiring to speak to these people with such passion, commitment and dedication. One can see just how committed they are to improve the productivity of their farms and the wellbeing of the land they work on.

When we undertook this tour, I thought to myself that this is an incredible testament, because it brings me back to the first point that I made; that is, the McGowan government is committed to jobs. Western Australian jobs has always been the government's number one priority. We have steered the community through the COVID-19 pandemic, and that work is ongoing, but as we get beyond COVID, hopefully, in the not-too-distant future, as vaccination rates pick up, we can start to look at how to rebuild the economy. Initiatives such as this familiarisation tour serve to do two things. The first is that it demonstrates quite clearly to the people in those communities that the McGowan Labor government has their back. We are interested in what they are doing, we are here to help and we want to make sure that their products can make it to international markets. The second is that by encouraging those producers to grow, expand, innovate and seize those entrepreneurial opportunities, we create more jobs in the regions. What underpins both those initiatives and really worthwhile objectives is a proper regulatory regime.

I commend the member for Roe for being the only member of the opposition to have sat through this debate. He is the one member out of all the opposition members to have participated by listening to the contribution —

Ms S.E. Winton: It's unbelievable!

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: I was astounded when the member for Wanneroo was on her feet and a whole bunch of opposition members returned to the chamber at about 12.45 pm. The member for Wanneroo said, "Welcome back. You've come to hear my contribution." The member for Cottesloe said, "No we haven't. We've come in to make our private members' statements." They were not even interested in listening to the contributions that passionate Labor members were making in support of the regions and in support of this legislation.

Ms S.E. Winton: They were just trying to throw the member for Roe under the bus.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: The member for Roe is the only member who stayed. Thankfully, he finally got the call when he did to stand up and contribute to this debate, because if he had not, the Agricultural Produce Commission Amendment Bill 2021 would have passed without a second reading debate. All the contributions made, with the exception of that of the member for Roe, were made by Labor Party members who are passionate about making sure that the regulatory regime is in place to promote efficiency and effectiveness in the marketplace, passionate about growing Western Australian jobs and passionate about diversifying our economy. This is another piece of the puzzle for which the minister and the government must be commended. I support the passage of this bill.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Thornlie) [3.25 pm]: I am pleased to speak to the Agricultural Produce Commission Amendment Bill 2021. It will really put in place producers' committees for all kinds of agricultural produce. The member for Roe touched on how it is a system that enables levies to be put in place in certain industries to fund activities that can be extremely positive and enhancing for an industry. For example, it could be about the marketing of a particular produce or about the biosecurity measures necessary for various areas of produce. More than anything, what I find particularly exciting with this legislation is that it sets us on the right trajectory for what is known as geographical indication. This is something that is really exciting. It is the way forward for agricultural production if we want it to move beyond being about commodity production. We do not want agricultural producers to be price takers—whereby they put produce onto the global market and take whatever the global market price is. We want our agricultural produce to be dominated by sectors that are into price setting in which the produce can be promoted as unique, which enables the price to be set. The best way to do that is through this system of geographical indication. I say all this, but, and the member for Roe might be able to correct me on this, to the best of my knowledge our peak agricultural lobby groups—Western Australian Farmers Federation and the Pastoralists and Graziers Association—are, at best, sceptical about geographical indication. It is an issue that comes up every time we talk

about the emerging Australia–European Union Free Trade Agreement as being potentially a barrier to geographical indication taking place. A whole free trade agreement encompassing so many sectors could be held up because a few people in the agricultural sector are scared about what geographical indication might mean, even though geographical indication can actually be an amazing opportunity for agricultural producers, especially Australian agricultural producers.

I really urge those in the agricultural sector to see this as a brilliant opportunity. We have produce that is unique to this part of the world and it should be marketed as such. One of the things that these producers' committees enables us to do is to set production standards. The average consumer can then go into a Coles, a Woolworths or an IGA and see on the shelf a particular product that comes from one region or another. They might not be able to do the research on the production standards that have gone into the making of that product, but they know that if they really like truffles that come from Manjimup, they can later find out what the production standard is: Was it a dog or a pig that was used to sniff out the truffle? What colour truffle was produced? When is the best time of year for that truffle to be dug up? They can then feel some sort of affinity with the particular property. They might have even visited the property on a holiday and know something about where the produce has come from. This is one of the beauties of these producers' committees that I see as potentially evolving into a system of geographical indication.

It gives us a fantastic opportunity to create a real bond between producer and consumer. That is a great strength. We get the price setting capability when there is that bond between producer and consumer. This is very much the experience in Europe, where there is a great food culture. Whenever one watches the great food programs that come from Europe with Rick Stein or Maeve O'Meara, or one of the other SBS programs, as they do their tours around Europe they always talk about the wonderful connection people have with the food of their country, their culture, and where that food comes from. This is one of the ways we can really instil that into our culture and make sure that it is highly profitable for the producers and that they become more respected than ever as the producers of quality products.

I am seeing uniquely Australian interpretations on this. I had the pleasure of riding in the City of Armadale's gran fondo. Congratulations to the organisers of that event. This gran fondo bike ride is new and Hills Emporio in Karragullen, run by Simon and Nat, made a feature of that event by highlighting local produce. Wines, honey and all sorts of other produce from the region was there for participants to buy at the beginning or end of the cycling event. I thought that was a very good way of promoting to people who often ride their bikes in the Armadale–Kelmscott part of the Perth hills. They appreciate the beauty and aesthetics, the lovely climbs, the orchards and everything going on there, and can also appreciate the food produce that comes from the region and get to know a little more about the story of that region. To be there along with the Mayor of the City of Armadale, Ruth Butterfield, and to present the awards to the riders and enjoy the day was a positive occasion and something I very much enjoyed.

One thing that concerns me a little in the legislation is that, as I understand it, pastoral leaseholders are exempt. No doubt they have lobbied and said that they have so many price constraints that they are exempt from the need to form the agricultural produce committees. I think that might be a missed opportunity and some changes might be afoot there. I worry when I hear that the pastoral lease sector is again crying poor. I was amazed when I looked at the latest figures on how much a pastoral lease costs in annual rental. The figures are astounding. I often make the comparison between what it costs to rent 250 000 hectares, a typical size of a pastoral lease, and the cost of renting a house in Thornlie. It is much cheaper to rent 250 000 hectares in the Pilbara or the Kimberley. It is much, much cheaper to do that than it is to rent a three-by-one house in Thornlie. When people cry poor and say that they could not possibly be involved in producer committees because it would be another financial impost on them and it would send them broke, it just does not add up; it does not make sense. I know there are many in the pastoral sector who have control—they do not own it; they are tenants—over I think about 35 or 37 per cent of the state. They are becoming increasingly progressive in their outlook about how they manage their land and the opportunities that this government has made available to them. The opportunities around carbon farming are exciting diversification opportunities that will help enhance their financial viability in the future.

This legislation is a very exciting opportunity. It is something that we should all embrace. I heard from the member for Roe. I understand that much in Western Australian agriculture is dominated by broadacre producers. I did my tertiary studies at Muresk Institute of Agriculture, which was dominated by broadacre farming. It is true that it is a bit hard to see how a premium product will be made. I think it can be done but I know some people argue that making a premium product from Western Australian wheat cannot be done. We like to say that it is high quality, but in the end we become price takers; it is a commodity product. We must highlight the unique features and benefits of it and, as well, talk about the various production standards that we are meeting and use that as an opportunity to improve those production standards to ensure that we are making more and more efficient use of things such as fertilisers and that we are not wasting nitrogen and phosphorus that is then washed into river systems, causing algal blooms and what have you later. We must ensure that there is good, efficient use of those inputs.

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We are set for a very large grain harvest. It will be somewhere between 13 million and 15 million tonnes this year if things keep going as well as they have been. However, we must bear in mind that on a global scale, in terms of agricultural production per hectare, we are not very efficient. Our hectares do not produce much in the way of produce because of the nature of the soil, but to make up for that just by putting on large amounts of fertiliser and then some of that fertiliser being wasted is not the way to go. We must find a way of making our agriculture highly efficient and by diversifying—enabling producers to be diverse and not just reliant on one or two enterprises on the property. If someone is running a wheat and sheep farm, they are taking a big financial risk because although prices might be good for grain at the moment, they cannot rely on that into the future. They must be able to diversify into these areas where we are marketing the uniqueness of our product, eventually through geographic indication. That will be a great opportunity for us. I look forward to hearing how this system of producers' committees evolves and gives the primary industry sector in Western Australia more opportunities and more financial returns.

MS C.M. ROWE (Belmont) [3.37 pm]: I wish to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Agricultural Produce Commission Amendment Bill 2021. Although my electorate of Belmont does not necessarily have a plethora of agricultural primary producers, I am pleased to speak on this bill because agriculture and all industries within this sector make a critical contribution to our economic strength and the provision of employment across Western Australia. Western Australian primary industries are significant contributors to the economy and they support around 58 400 jobs, which is huge, with 39 300 people directly employed in agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and forestry and 19 100 people directly employed in food, beverage and forest manufacturing. Primary industries also contribute to employment with 162 000 jobs in the WA supply chain from paddock to plate.

In 2018–19, primary industries had a gross value of production of \$11.7 billion and exports were valued at \$8.4 billion. The importance of our agricultural industries in WA is undeniable from these figures alone. I acknowledge the Minister for Agriculture and Food, Hon Alannah MacTiernan, for her continued and tireless promotion and support of these industries through her portfolio.

This bill before us today sets out to modernise the Agricultural Produce Commission Act 1988. The amendments put forward were largely born out of a comprehensive review of the act in 2006 and provide a mechanism for the provision and funding of services by agricultural producers to agricultural producers. The current act provides producers with mechanisms to ensure they can operate effectively, and empowers them to grow their industries through the establishment of producers' committees. These committees are run by producers for producers, as they very well should be; they are therefore the voice for their industry.

The act provides a mechanism that producers can choose to access if they wish. By creating a producers' committee for their industry, producers can combine their efforts and resources and work together to achieve the identified goals of their industry. These may include developing new markets, increasing production standards, and addressing common threats, such as pests and biosecurity matters. There are currently 11 producers' committees, for the following industries: avocados, beekeeping, Carnarvon bananas, eggs, pome fruit, citrus and stone fruit, pork, potatoes, strawberries, table grapes, vegetables and wine.

These producers' committees do really important work, from undertaking research activities—which other members have noted, including the commercialisation of Bravo apples, a personal favourite of my children!—to paying compensation to banana growers in Carnarvon in the aftermath of cyclone Olwyn. The committees also deliver important promotional activities, one of which other members have acknowledged, the Crunch&Sip program in schools. As a parent of two young primary school-aged children, I am acutely aware of this program, and even though it can be a point of frustration in the morning when I am frantically trying to scrounge for fresh fruit and vegetables in the fridge, I think it sends a really great and powerful message to our children, instilling healthy eating habits from a young age, which they will hopefully carry through to adulthood.

Importantly, the committees also undertake biosecurity activities, such as support for eradication of the Queensland fruit fly when there was an outbreak in Alfred Cove in 2016. The member for Swan Hills spoke about the importance of this mechanism when she talked about the damage that is caused by rainbow lorikeets to not only native flora and fauna but also primary producers.

The committees also provide support for the unique needs of specific industries. For example, the Beekeeping Producers' Committee supports beekeeper training, produces *Beeinformed* magazine, monitors biosecurity policies and advocates to state and federal Parliaments for enhanced pest and disease surveillance in order to better protect the industry here in WA. Another function of the Beekeeping Producers' Committee is to ensure that the industry remains supported by leading, cutting-edge research about bee health and disease prevention and other matters as well.

The reason I am dwelling on this particular committee is the extensive media coverage over recent years that has highlighted the plight of bees, not only here in WA, but also across the country and the globe. According to an article posted on ABC News on 25 June 2018, bee populations had fallen by one-third in some parts of the world. That is really quite dramatic. According to the article, experts pointed to a particular disease that causes bees' wings to

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deform, and identified climate change as the leading cause of this radical decline in bee numbers. We need to ensure adequate protection of bees because of the critical role they play in our ecosystems and our agricultural industries. Bee pollination is integral to supporting and assisting around 35 per cent of our total food production, and it is suggested in the same article—titled “Bees are dying. What can we do about it?”—that around 75 per cent of all crops receive some benefit from pollination by bees. According to experts, the impact or consequence of poor pollination could be lower yields of crops, or fruit that is misshapen and therefore unable to be sold.

Ultimately, the role of the APC producers’ committees is to provide the services required by producers of agricultural produce. This bill will improve the effectiveness of the APC mechanism for the provision and funding of services by agricultural producers to agricultural producers, and will allow current APC groups to continue the very important work they do here in our state. The minister listened to the concerns of the industry through a comprehensive consultation process that was undertaken over a number of years, and has responded appropriately through this legislation.

Primary industries are vital to our state. Agriculture is a crucial component of our economy and is also a key aspect of our state’s identity. It is critical to protect, support, and grow these industries that provide so much for Western Australia. Our government is providing producers with the resources and support they require to grow their industries so that they can thrive into the future. I commend this bill to the house.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Tourism) [3.46 pm] — in reply: I thank the members for Belmont, Roe, Moore, Albany, Geraldton, Warren–Blackwood, Swan Hills, Wanneroo, Mount Lawley and Gosnells for their contributions to debate on the Agricultural Produce Commission Amendment Bill 2021. The bill was delivered from the other place through the great efforts of the Minister for Agriculture and Food, Hon Alannah MacTiernan. A number of members raised issues, and I thank them for their concerns and contributions. I thank the opposition for what I have noted as its general, but hesitant and concerned, support. That would probably describe the member for Roe’s contribution. I also want to highlight and respond to a couple of those concerns. I do not wish to keep the house late today. We will obviously go into consideration in detail and complete this bill this afternoon. That is the intention.

A couple of key issues were highlighted, and I will go through them because I think I may be able to allay some of the concerns raised by the members for Roe and Moore, and possibly other members. The first is the issue of broadacre cropping. A number of members have raised concerns about the removal of the exemption for broadacre cropping and have asked whether this will mean that broadacre producers will have a committee forced upon them. I want to stress that that is not the case under this legislation. There has been a lot of debate on the broadacre issue in the other place over a number of years in respect of the drafting and shaping of this amending legislation. I want to stress that it is not a case of a committee being forced upon anyone.

The removal of the exemption will give broadacre crop producers an opportunity to participate, should they vote to do so. The commission cannot force a committee onto an industry. Committees are initiated, established and operated at the request of producers, and the fees they charge are determined in consultation with those producers, based on the services that the producers have said that they want the committee to provide. There are many agricultural industries that have chosen to not establish a committee under this legislation. Although a number of committees currently exist under this legislation, there are many that do not, and that is demonstrative of their choice in the matter. A number of members highlighted that the focus of choice is a key component of consideration. Ultimately, if the broadacre industry does not want to take advantage of the APC mechanism, it does not have to do so. All this legislation does is remove the exclusion that prevented them from establishing a committee if they wanted to do so. I hope that clarifies the matter.

The member for Roe and some other members highlighted issues around the opt-out clause. There has been much discussion in this place and the other place about the opt-out clause. Here we are providing a head of power for an opt-out clause to be made in regulations. There has been concern about what that might look like. As the regulations under this legislation will be designed to support each committee and the operations of their industry, the way that an opt-out functions will differ for each industry. As of yet, existing committees have not approached the Agricultural Produce Commission or the department asking for consideration of such provisions in the regulations once this bill is passed and the head power is available. It is more likely that the new committee will wish to design regulations to include this component, and this will be an issue raised by the commission when it commences discussions with producers about their proposal to form a committee for their industry. It is important to emphasise that the reason for including a head of power for regulations to be made on this issue is that we want to give committees the flexibility to determine whether a waiver, refund or reduction in power will work for their industry; and, if so, how they want it to work. This is consistent with the spirit of the act and the way that producers’ committees operate. It is not appropriate to have a one-size-fits-all option, as that ignores the wishes of the producers and their committees. I draw the member for Roe’s attention to the submission from WAFarmers dated July 2020, which specifically makes mention of the opt-out issue. I quote the submission —

We note the advice provided by the State Solicitor's Office of the legal merits of placing the opt out provisions in the regulations and accept that it is the most workable approach and that the risk of legislators moving to impose new fees on growers is not born out by past experience.

It goes on to ask the government to fast-track the drafting or preparation of those regulations, but I think that is a clear indication from the WA Farmers Federation of an understanding of why those opt-out provisions will be delivered through regulation rather than in the legislation. The federation describes it as being the most workable approach. That is not my quote; that is from the WA Farmers Federation.

The member for Roe and the member for Moore highlighted issues around levies. Members talked about producers being locked into a framework that they do not want for fear of having to pay levies that duplicate what they already pay. I want to explain how committees can address any potential duplication. For industries that pay other charges or levies, the relevant producers' committee will generally work with the peak state and national bodies responsible for the expenditure of the other charge or levy to provide desired or complementary services. There have been many situations in which a committee has worked with the commission, the department and other national bodies to combine funding in order to achieve a specific outcome. There are a couple of examples of this, one being the current project being undertaken with the berries industry, with funding for an industry development officer being provided to the national berries industry body, Berries Australia, the Strawberry Producers Committee and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. The collaborative funding provides targeted industry-driven service provision and helps to invest national levies paid by growers back in WA and, in this case, enables co-investment with state government. Another example is the pome industry seeking the ability to export Bravo apples to Japan, Taiwan and China. In this case DPIRD, the Pome, Citrus and Stonefruit Producers' Committee and Fruit West combined their funding to conduct research and provided the results and findings to the federal agency for that to be progressed. Committees work to identify opportunities to improve value for dollar paid by producers in levies and charges, and any duplication of fees and services can be addressed by the committee in consultation with producers. Ultimately, the role of the APC producers' committee is to provide services required by producers of the relevant agricultural produce.

Some members had issues around setting of charges and concern that a committee may be established and charges then imposed on producers that do not want to pay them. A fee-for-service charge is determined by the relevant committee in consultation with its producers, and as the charge is a fee for service, it is linked to a service that the industry wants the committee to provide. Producers are able to advise the committee where they want or do not want a service to be provided. On two occasions, producers' committees have voted for a fee-for-service charge and then in subsequent years decided that they are no longer necessary. An example of that is that there are currently no levies on either avocados or eggs, because the industries decided they did not want to receive a service from their committee, so there was no need to impose a fee or service charge.

I turn to weighted voting. I think that was one of the key concerns of the member for Roe. He highlighted his concerns about weighted voting. The amendments in the bill will allow the commission to use weighted voting in an establishment poll, but only when the commission has sufficient industry data available for it to determine what the appropriate weighting should be. Ultimately, the commission must be satisfied that the use of weighted voting is in the best interests of the agricultural industry. I think that is an important consideration about the weighted voting issue.

Issues were raised about who sits on the committee. I think the member for Roe raised some issues about appointment. When a committee is first established, the commission is required under section 11 of the act to invite nominations from the producers for appointment to a committee, and after receiving nominations, the committee shall decide how many members there should be and whether a poll of producers should be held to elect the members. The members are appointed to committees by the commission, and if a poll is held to elect members, the commission must appoint the members elected in that poll. A person can be appointed to a committee only if they are a producer of the relevant agricultural produce. Most members are aware of how a committee is established. It is important to note that the establishment of those committees does not happen overnight. Indeed, it took some 10 years before the committee for the wine industry was established and started operating. That is because the commission spends an extensive amount of time establishing the extent of the support and discussing what services the industry is interested in obtaining and how the industry works. All of this occurs before an establishment poll is even held. The commission undertakes a lot of time, effort and consultation before anything leads to a potential establishment poll. The commission is aware ahead of time whether there is any division within industry on the proposal to establish a committee. In order for the establishment process to commence, a producer or a group of producers would need to approach the commission and request that such a poll be conducted. The commission is required to advertise the proposal to establish a producers' committee for the type of agricultural produce and is required to invite submissions from producers who may be affected, and the commission is required to have regard to those submissions. A poll is then held to identify producers for the establishment of the committee. Essentially, a majority of the producers

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need to vote in favour of the establishment of the committee for the commission to establish that committee, and the commission has a policy on polling whereby it requires 60 per cent of producers to vote in favour of the establishment of such a committee.

I have mentioned the duplication of fees. There was an issue around the setting of charges. I highlighted that the fee for service is determined by the relevant committee in consultation with the stakeholders, or producers in this case. I highlighted that the egg and avocado industries are examples of an industry sector deciding to not seek to impose a service fee. I have highlighted vote weighting. Some members highlighted issues around a prescribed agricultural industry. I note that members asked why clause 4—this might have been a matter that either the member for Roe or the member for Moore raised with me—provides for regulations to prescribe what is an agricultural industry. This is how the act currently works. It is not being amended. The definition of “agricultural industry” in the Agricultural Produce Commission Act states —

agricultural industry means a horticultural industry and such other agricultural industry as may be prescribed ...

The reason for this is that new industries will emerge over time and we do not want them to be prevented from establishing a committee to represent them because an act amendment is required to broaden the definition. That would allow for the establishment of a committee by future sector interests in the agricultural and horticultural industries; for example, hemp, insects and lupins. Another example referred to by the member for Warren–Blackwood, I think, was truffles.

Members asked which aspects of this bill reflect recommendations made by the review that was carried out in 2006. Several of the issues that we have been discussing stem from the recommendations made in 2006; namely, the inclusion of an opt-out provision and weighted voting. Other changes include the broadening of committee services to include educational or instructional programs, strengthening the power of the commission to audit documents, and clarifying that charges collected by a person is held by that person in trust for the committee until it is paid to the commission. I am glancing at my advisers, who are sitting patiently. There is a document that explains what provisions of this bill, if any, implement the recommendations of that committee. I have that and can table it during the consideration in detail stage if required.

This bill has a long history. The Minister for Agriculture and Food explained to me the intricacies of the politics of the broadacre issues and the long-held views of various parties. The gestation period for the amendments to this act go back some years. I take note of the member for Wanneroo’s comments that it is a Labor government that is continuing to reform the provisions around the Agricultural Produce Commission and its endeavours. The Labor government is, of course, responding to the changing pressures, challenges and nature of the agricultural and horticultural industries of Western Australia. I congratulate the Minister for Agriculture and Food in the other place once again for her tenacity in finally bringing to this Parliament sensible, appropriate and consultative amendments and dealing with some of the issues that clearly would have frustrated the previous government because it did not do anything in this space.

With that, I urge members to support the legislation before us, because it essentially empowers growers to come together to establish schemes for the mutual benefit of their industries. As we know, it already has resulted in beneficial outcomes for many groups. Let us not further delay this important reform. Let us get it in place and ensure that the commission can continue to do its important work. If and when the committees are formed, they can be informed by industry and continue to do the important work they are established to do under this legislative framework.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave denied to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 3 put and passed.

Clause 4: Section 3 amended —

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I will be relatively brief, but I have a few questions that I would like answers to on a few of the clauses. Further to the minister’s comments in his second reading reply, the definition of “agricultural industry” in clause 4(2) is that which “concerns livestock enterprises conducted on land under a pastoral lease”. It is ironic that when we look back to Wednesday, 24 May 2000, Hon Murray Criddle moved an amendment to delete all words after “industry” and substitute —

means horticultural industry and such other agricultural industry as may be prescribed but excluding broadacre cropping and grazing industries.

Hon Kim Chance said —

I am happy to indicate that I and my colleagues will support the proposed amendment.

Fifteen years later, the wheel has turned again.

Aside from that little history lesson, I would like some clarity. I am worried when I look at this wording—“generally conducted on land under a pastoral lease”. In the other place, we heard references to pastoralists bringing down their cattle, for argument’s sake, to a property in the agricultural region. Someone asked what would happen if a pastoralist had two separate properties. Firstly, if someone who owns a pastoral station brings the cattle down and fattens them up, for argument’s sake, are they excluded under these arrangements? Secondly, what if they own two separate properties—one property in the pastoral region and one property in the agricultural region? I would like that clarified.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I thank the member for his question. I want to draw the member’s attention to the minister’s response to this particular issue in the other place. There was a concern about whether an animal moved from a pastoral property to a freehold property would be captured under the scope of the agricultural industry that the committee was responsible for. In response to those concerns, the Minister for Agriculture and Food moved an amendment in the other place to insert “generally”. This was accepted by the Legislative Council. The revised definition provides that an agricultural industry can be prescribed for the purposes of that definition, other than an industry that concerns livestock enterprises generally conducted on land under a pastoral lease. Essentially, the member is concerned about the implications of the word “generally”. The revised definition that was provided gives that some clarity. In the other place, Hon Alannah MacTiernan said —

I think we are getting down to some very fine points here. I am not arguing that. I am saying that if a person is the owner of an enterprise in Dandaragan, it may well be that all the activities that they do on that property in Dandaragan are captured by this. However, bear in mind that this would come about only should the industry decide that it wanted to go down this particular path.

They are the considerations of the committee —

This is purely an enabling thing. If part of the business of an operator in Dandaragan was to bring their animals down, those animals might in fact be captured in some way in a scheme, but if they were a pastoralist and their enterprise was in the pastoral region, the fact that they might background their cattle on another property would not bring that enterprise into the purview of the act.

The minister made that fairly clear in her comments. That explanation and the review of the definition was supported in the other place.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I thank the minister for that explanation. I am responding on behalf of the Pastoralists and Graziers Association, which generally represents pastoralists. It is fairly clear that if cattle are being brought down from a pastoral block and being feedlotted temporarily, that is fine. I felt that the minister’s explanation in the other place relating to pastoralists shifting cattle back and forth at different times of the year between properties they owned left a bit to be desired. There was a little lack of clarity. It was almost a case of working it out as we go. The worry is that later we will be pushed and asked, “Why didn’t you ask the question?” There was not a lot of clarity in that example. I know that people who own properties experience both situations. That would be a concern. I do not know whether any of the advisers have any other comments on that issue.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am advised that essentially the amendment does address that issue and the minister sought to define with more clarity the status of “produced on pastoral land”. The minister’s comments in the other place and the reworked definition aspects within this amendment have provided that clarity.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I have a final question: who will decide and how? That is my last question relating to the question mark over shifting stock from one property to another.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: As the minister highlighted in her comments during the second reading debate and during the committee stage, this is a producer-driven entity. Essentially, the producers would have direct input into how that operation of the committee, if they decided to set one up, would operate, because they would determine the priorities. As we know, priorities within existing committees vary. Some focus on research and some focus on how to improve the marketability of their product. The producers would need to come together seeking to establish a committee. A long consultative process is needed for that to happen. In doing so, if at some point having established that there were issues around references to the pastoral lease origins issue, the legislation ensures that that will not be imposed upon that group that has formed the committee.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5 to 10 put and passed.

Clause 11: Part 3 Divisions 2 and 3 inserted —

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I refer to proposed section 11C(1)(b), which states, “the poll is in favour of the proposal.” I have heard a couple of references to “50 per cent”. Proposed section 11C(1) states —

The Commission must not allocate responsibility for agricultural produce to an existing producers’ committee unless —

- (a) the Commission has —
 - (i) complied with section 11A(4) and (5); and
 - (ii) conducted a poll under section 11B among the producers of the agricultural produce;
- and
- (b) the poll is in favour of the proposal.

Could the minister clarify whether it is just 50 per cent or whether it is 51 per cent or 75 per cent?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: It is not 50 per cent; it is, in fact, 60 per cent. I refer the member to the Agricultural Produce Commission’s documentation regarding producers’ committee establishment polls. I will table this for the member. Page 4 refers to the policy of the commission and states —

The Commission will not establish a committee unless a supportive vote of 60% of those that respond to the poll has been achieved.

It is very clearly 60 per cent and that is the existing policy position of the commission, and that will, of course, apply to the establishment of any future committees.

I table the Agricultural Produce Commission’s producers’ committee establishment polls policy statement.

[See paper [420](#).]

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 12 to 20 put and passed.

Clause 21: Section 16 amended —

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: On page 21 of the bill, new section 16(1)(a) states that the commission must —

in the case of a producers’ committee that has, or is proposed to have, responsibility for agricultural produce for the whole of the State — compile a list of producers of the agricultural produce in the whole of the State ...

What evidence does it rely on and where does it get the list from?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I thank the member for his question. The advice I have is that the commission works with the body or producers requesting the establishment poll, so to compile this list it has to identify the most appropriate definition of producer. For example, with wine, it was decided to be the owner of the grapes at the point of crush; and for vegetables or fruit, it is the producer of horticultural produce of the particular type of which the committee is being established. Identifying those producers that meet the definition will be done by ensuring that the pre-polling consultation process includes clear information on who will be considered a producer and requesting that persons who fall within this definition contact the commission to ensure that they are included in the polling list so that they can participate in the poll or to advise why they should not be considered a producer, should they not want to be included as a producer. The commission will be able to request membership information from industry associations or other established bodies about which producers might belong; for example, in the wine producers’ poll, the holders of a producer’s licence with the then Department of Racing, Gaming and Liquor were identified as producers. In the notice that advises of the conduct of the poll, the commission will state that a list of eligible producers is being compiled and will invite producers to view the list. People who may have questions about the list will be requested to contact the returning officer by a nominated date. Essentially, the list will be compiled from a variety of sources, including already established industry and sector entities, and there will be a process of advertising for input from those who may seek to be included within the definition of a producer within that particular industry. A relevant industry registration, such as with beekeepers, who are required to be registered with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, would be an example of a source from a government department.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: In a broadacre sense, when we talk about grain growers statewide, for argument’s sake, I assume that the commission would go to the CBH register. How would the commission deal with the approximately 3 800 CBH shareholders within the CBH register, some of whom have different trading names but may be the one producer?

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Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am advised that it is quite forensic. In the wine industry experience, it took 10 years to establish that committee. Essentially, it will be sourced from available registrations and information that both government and industry sector groups collect. It will continue until there is clarity about the identification of producers. Obviously, that task can take some time, as in the case of the wine industry, and as the member is probably aware, wine production and those who produce wines can be registered under various entities, so the commission essentially sought to ensure that proper and appropriate identification was made before an entity was counted as a producer.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I move now to new section 16(1)(b), which states —

in the case of a producers' committee that has, or is proposed to have, responsibility for agricultural produce only in relation to a particular part of the State ...

Let us say the west Katanning barley growers group, which I might be part of, decides that there is a particular variety of barley that is suitable for the area and it would like to raise some money to look at that variety. How will the commission ascertain who is in that group? How will the commission interact with that group?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I have been to Katanning, and I think it is a great place. I have not been to west Katanning in detail. Member, ultimately, the spirit of the establishment of committees is based upon direct and ongoing influence by those who are interested in establishing one. There is a framework that sets out the provisions for the establishment of such a committee, and in the case of west Katanning, if there were specific growers—obviously, as in the case that the member has given—it would certainly be up to those growers to seek and garner support for such an entity to be created, and, of course, there is a process in the case of poll provisions et cetera that would lead ultimately to the establishment or not of such an entity. The whole framework of this, both its history and the current amendments, are very much framed upon choice. A number of members who contributed to the second reading debate highlighted that as being an important component. I wish the west Katanning grain growers committee of the future all the very best if that was their endeavour.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A.E. Scaife): I believe it was the barley growers association.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 22: Sections 16A and 16B inserted —

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I refer to proposed section 16A(2)(a) and (b) on page 22 of the bill. This relates to weighted voting and I guess this is really my last area of concern. I saw in the *Hansard* of the other place that there was a reference to this, and I noted in my second reading contribution my concerns over weighted voting, whereby certain producers, whatever commodity it is, will actually potentially take control or exert a lot of influence over a certain type of industry. We had a reference there I think from the minister that if there are 20 wine growers and two or three growers grow 80 per cent of the wine grapes, they will have control or vote weighting to that extent. It really worries me that two or three growers can have that type of influence. It is not the fault of the smaller grower that they do not grow as much, but quite often they would like an equal say. It is no different from any industry: there are always big players and smaller players. As I said in my example, if someone said, "You should grow 20 000 tonnes of grain or you shouldn't be a director", that does not always count, because sometimes the smaller growers might have good things to say and to contribute.

I guess I would like an explanation. I believe that is a dangerous precedent to set. I would like to hear the minister's comments on this proposed new section.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Member, I am advised that the Western Australian Farmers Federation was one entity that supported the concept of the introduction of a weighted voting process. Indeed, I am advised that one of the criticisms of the act by the WA Grains Group and the Pastoralists and Graziers Association was that weighted voting was not available for use in polls. In this case, the premise of their criticism was that larger producers of industry would tend to pay the bulk of the charge, and it may be the smaller, more numerous producers who constitute the majority who impose the charge on the whole industry but pay less of the charge. They referenced that as the reason there was a need for consideration of a weighted process.

This scenario can currently occur in theory because each producer will have only one vote in each poll. However, the opportunity for weighted voting is proposed to be provided by clause 22, which we are currently considering, and weighted voting specifically addresses the concern outlined in the scenario.

Clause 22 introduces the concept of weighted voting, which can be used when the commission is satisfied according to some criteria. The first is that there is sufficient industry data available to use weighted voting; second, that it is in fact in the best interests of the agricultural region to do so. There are some issues and provisos around data collection or data availability in that case. In making a decision on the weighted voting aspect, it is my understanding that currently the commission would require five years of data, which is an appropriate sample of data, if you like.

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Consolidated industry production levels are another important consideration, as is the individual production levels of each producer, and, essentially, consolidated data, which would need to be industry verified or accepted verified data.

I understand what the member is saying. Weighted voting is a very interesting issue for many of us in this place and in other places. I note that the member alluded to a number of things during question time. But can I just say, I think the weighted voting option has been weighed up very carefully. I obviously support this proposed section and I believe it should be supported.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I thank the minister, I appreciate the explanation, and I guess I just comment that, obviously, as the minister said, different people have different feelings on these things, in a variety of sectors. I am certainly focused on the producer groups and the like, and I always find it important to have a wide representation of the smaller growers and the larger growers. It is no different from the voter in the Mining and Pastoral Region versus the voter in the North Metropolitan Region. We need a wide range of people. I believe that that is a really important perspective that the Agricultural Produce Commission needs to be careful of, I guess. Those are the comments I wanted to make. Otherwise, I appreciate the time of the minister and the advisers today. I thank them very much.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 23 to 31 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

[Leave granted to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Third Reading

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Tourism) [4.40 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a third time.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe) [4.40 pm]: I will make a few brief comments. I appreciate the Leader of the House's answers at the consideration in detail stage of the Agricultural Produce Commission Amendment Bill 2021. I want to point out a couple of things from the contributions. I appreciate the contributions from some of our regional members and also our peri-urban members; I think that is how the Leader of the House's electorate was described. The member for Geraldton is probably the only Labor member who is representing the broadacre industry to some extent. The member for Moore and I also made contributions; we are genuinely involved in the broadacre, cropping and livestock industry, and we understand some of the heat that comes on as a result of a bill such as this. I believe the Agricultural Produce Commission in general terms is a good thing, and it is great especially for smaller industries. However, it was interesting to me that during those contributions I generally did not hear too much about the levies paid by broadacre people who either produce crops or livestock.

As I said in my second reading contribution, it can be up to 12 or 13 per cent of their gross income. There are concerns in people's minds in the background. They listen to the *Country Hour* and people on radio programs whose comments may not always necessarily be true. There are sometimes scare tactics, and that worries them. They are concerned that another levy will be slapped on them and they may not necessarily receive any benefit from it. That is where that is coming from. We just wanted to make sure that we put that on the record on behalf of our broadacre producers.

As I have said previously, there have been concerns in the pastoral sector. I think largely they have been addressed now. My only concern now is the opt-out regulations. I believe that in the other place, concerns were raised about this matter from several angles. The concern is that regulations may or may not be produced somewhere in the distance and we do not know what they will be while we are trying to talk about the legislation. That was the reasoning behind Hon Colin de Grussa moving that amendment. We would have preferred the clarity. Despite quotes that have been thrown around here in the chamber, several of the Western Australian Farmers Federation's representations have been that it would have preferred that in the legislation, rather than in regulation.

I do not think I need to go on too much longer. I have concerns about the weighted voting, as the Leader of the House knows. It is really an issue on which we need a broad range of people from within an industry to represent their thoughts on what is going on. I thank the Leader of the House for the clarity on the 60 per cent. I think it is important to have more than just 50 per cent; that is for sure. As the Leader of the House and many of the speakers have said, this has been going on for a long time, so I am sure that the Agricultural Produce Commission will get on with its work and do a good job, especially in relation to those smaller industries.

I have just a final point about levies. The member for Moore mentioned this matter. Biosecurity levies seem to get plonked into certain regions around the state. We cannot quite understand why one area has them and another area does not. The minister seems to come in and prescribe the scenario in a certain area. I know that sometimes a biosecurity group wants a levy and it uses it for pest and weed control and the like, but quite often it is done without as much consultation as we would like. As with everything, consultation of the community and growers is really

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important. I think in the Agricultural Produce Commission scenario, the ability to consult and poll the producers is much better than it is with some of these other things, such as our biosecurity regions and the like. I thank the Leader of the House for his time.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Tourism) [4.43 pm] — in reply: I thank the member for Moore and other members who spoke during the debate on the Agricultural Produce Commission Amendment Bill 2021. I congratulate the Minister for Agriculture and Food for the passing of this bill through both houses. I also thank again the advisers who assisted me: Angela Howie, Karen Barlow and Ingrid Behr. I am very pleased that the bill has passed both houses of Parliament.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.