

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 14 February 2019]

p367d-399a

Dr Tony Buti; Mr John Carey; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Shane Love

PREMIER'S STATEMENT

Consideration

Resumed from 13 February on the following question —

That the Premier's Statement be noted.

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale) [9.11 am]: US educational reformer John Dewey said, "Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself." How true that statement is. Education is all-powerful. Along with all members, I value education. I am the only member of my family who went above junior high school and I have seen and experienced the power of education. I entered politics largely because of my passion for education. I did most of my schooling in my electorate, the community that I now represent. I entered parliamentary politics largely motivated by a desire to improve education opportunities for all Western Australians, but particularly for children from low socioeconomic regions. As Minister for Education and Training Hon Sue Ellery said to me some time ago, education is one of the few areas within which a state government can make a positive impact on the state.

With my passion for improving educational standards and opportunities for students, particularly students in my community and similar ones across Western Australia, I am extremely delighted with the student achievements and significant cultural change at Gwynne Park Primary School in west Armadale. I will speak more about Gwynne Park shortly. In my electorate, I have 10 public primary schools, four private primary schools, three public high schools, and two private high schools. I am impressed by the leadership of all my schools, but today I want to focus particularly on Gwynne Park Primary School. But before I do so, I want to talk very briefly about two other schools, Challis Community Primary School and Westfield Park Primary School.

Of course, the achievements of Challis Community Primary School, led by former Australian principal of the year Lee Musumeci, have been well documented and celebrated. Anyone who viewed *Don't Stop the Music* could not but be moved by the dedication of the Challis leadership staff and students. I do not have time to mention all the achievements, programs and investments of the Challis Community Primary School, but I will just say a few things. In 2018, the staff at Challis Community Primary School started to write a new Challis story for the children residing in the Seville Grove community. As a staff, they collectively imagine a story of hope, full of possibilities, choice and opportunities. As educators, they understand their terrific influence on the life stories of their children. Therefore, the script they write is full of belief, nurturing relationships, safety, exceptionally high-quality teaching standards and genuine partnerships with parents. The school has a relentless desire to improve academic and social outcomes for any child who walks through the school gates and it holds the belief that breaking the cycle of poverty is possible through quality education, significant complementary partnerships, working with students from birth and by creating a story of hope. Challis is working on a significant long-term concept that will address the cycle of poverty by lifting its gaze beyond current parameters and supporting Challis families from the womb to the workplace. This strategy takes a life course view of the support required for people raised in disadvantaged communities and increases the protective factors from conception through to employment, further training or university. The concept will create a pipeline of support and hope for this very large and complex community.

Now I would like to say a few words about Westfield Park Primary School in Camillo, which is led by a man of vision, Steve Soames. He and his staff have done a wonderful job. Over recent years, Westfield Park Primary School in Camillo has seen a dramatic improvement in its Australian Early Development Census data. The first data collection on children entering their first year of full-time schooling in 2009 showed that over 70 per cent of children were vulnerable in one or more domains and over 50 per cent were vulnerable in two or more domains. Westfield Park has sought to address many of these disadvantages through the dedication of the staff, flexible approaches and accessing the many services that are necessary to improve the lot of people in low socioeconomic suburbs. It offers a wide range of services and activities outside the normal school day to help meet the learning and development needs of children, their families and the local community. Additional services include a school-based social worker, a breakfast program, playgroups, parenting groups, after-school clubs and sports, before and after school day care and referred pathways to services and agencies. The school has adopted a community development approach and opened its doors to family and community groups, and many more families are actively involved in their children's education through playgroups and voluntary and after-school activities. The principal and staff at Westfield Park Primary School have been working hard in their community to ensure that the children and families they serve are provided with the opportunities that ensure a better start in life. The impact of their work is significant. The school has seen a downward trend in the number of children entering school developmentally vulnerable. Every triennial, AEDC data collection has shown an improvement on the previous dataset and in 2018, the school recorded only 13 per cent of its children were vulnerable in one or more domains and only three per cent were vulnerable in two or more domains.

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Now I turn to Gwynne Park Primary School. Before I continue, I acknowledge a selection of staff and community representatives from Gwynne Park Primary School in the Speaker's gallery. To continue the ethos of the school, which is very inclusive, we have people in the gallery from the leadership team, teachers, education assistants, the Aboriginal and Islander education officer and also members of the school committee. It is an outstanding school and I want to spend the rest of my time talking about this school. Before I forget, I seek an extension. I want to make sure that I do not forget.

[Member's time extended.]

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): I would not have let you forget. Even if you run out of time, the Acting Speaker can grant you an extension.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Thank you very much. You are very kind.

Gwynne Park is a primary school in an area of significant disadvantage. Gwynne Park Primary School punches well above its weight. Staffing is stable; leadership is clear; current NAPLAN results are the highest recorded; academic improvement is significant; attendance is at an all-time high; technology is profoundly integrated; mindfulness is practised; and the social needs of students and families are responded to. Gwynne Park Primary School in Armadale is not the school that members may think it is. The improvement at Gwynne Park Primary School is extraordinary. The reason is its people. Tethered to a negative historical perception and situated within an area of acute social disadvantage, the staff, partner agencies and families of Gwynne Park Primary School have worked relentlessly to drive significant cultural change and establish high expectations and an inclusive caring environment for all students. To be a member of the Gwynne Park Primary School community means to go above and beyond. The result of this commitment is that attendance is high, the improvement in literacy and numeracy is substantial, behaviours are respectful and relationships with the community are profound. Gwynne Park Primary School is a level 5 school with approximately 450 students on the Byford side of Armadale. It is in west Armadale, which is often known as the wrong side of the tracks. Gwynne Park Primary School rates in the tenth decile for socioeconomic advantage, with current Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage values placing it in the bottom seven per cent of schools in Australia and the bottom few schools in the Perth metropolitan area. Student transiency is around 30 per cent, but levels are improving. The demands placed on the school by the factors associated with disadvantage and transiency are significant. More than 150 students are at significant educational risk and are case-managed weekly by the student services team. Community services, such as the police, the Department of Communities, Foodbank, Parkerville Children and Youth Care, and the Smith Family report no decreasing trend in the number of people requiring help or intervention in the area. In some cases, numbers are increasing.

These issues stop at the gates of Gwynne Park Primary School. The school is not broken into or vandalised. The staff are treated courteously by the students and their families. Suspensions are approximately one-tenth of what they were five years ago. Staffing has become increasingly stable over the past five years, with little to no movement from year to year. Staff absentee rates are well below the expected level. All staff contribute to extracurricular activities. All staff are involved in teaching literacy. Student attendance rates for 2018 are the highest recorded and are well above the expected level. Having been part of a committee that handed down a report on student attendance last year, that is incredibly uplifting and promising. The attendance rate for Aboriginal students was the second highest recorded. The regular attendance rate for semester 1 in 2018 was the highest recorded. Today, the latest Closing the Gap report was released. It should be noted that the attendance rate last year for Aboriginal students at Gwynne Park Primary School was eight per cent above the state average.

Gwynne Park Primary School has a clear and stable focus on the following five areas: phonics, writing, numeracy, digital technology and wellbeing. The rollout of these priorities is deliberate, steady, well communicated and well supported. Program fidelity is championed. The result is acceptance by staff and engagement by students. Academic results are trending north across the school. Internal diagnostic and summative testing is supported by NAPLAN results, which show higher results in all areas of literacy, particularly writing. This is against national and state trends, which are downwards. It is a truly outstanding achievement.

Targeted whole-school approaches to wellbeing, literacy, numeracy and digital technologies cater for the whole child at Gwynne Park Primary School. Daily meditation sessions in class and weekly whole-school and community sessions encourage the students at Gwynne Park to observe the moment and clear their minds. I think we could probably use that in this place at times! Wellbeing at Gwynne Park Primary School is best practice, and it is the pilot school for Mindful Meditation Australia. Filmed practices at the school were used in the Positive Schools Conference to inspire other schoolteachers and school leaders. Students are now able to draw on meditation to solve problems and compose themselves in order to best engage with learning. Literacy blocks designed by staff in partnership with the Dyslexia-SPELD Foundation of WA provide a comprehensive approach to language development, integrating the "Letters and Sounds" and "Talk 4 Writing" programs into an authentic, whole-school approach. As I noted before, internal and external data demonstrate achievements and improvements in literacy

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across the board at Gwynne Park Primary School. When compared with like schools, reading results in year 3 have moved from the lowest in the country in 2010–11 to the top 10 per cent in 2017. Writing follows a similar trajectory, and the 2017 results place Gwynne Park Primary School in the top five per cent of like schools. Levels of progress from preprimary to year 3 are approximately three times that expected. Across 2017–18, all staff have explored and then delivered the “Stepping Stones Mathematics” program with targeted, small group activities for students requiring extra help, which was led by our extremely talented and dedicated education assistants. Internal pre-testing and post-testing of this whole-school program in 2017–18 has demonstrated clear improvements in numeracy across all levels of the school. The 2017 year 3 NAPLAN data for numeracy shows an improvement of 1.4 standard deviations over the results for 2016.

The people of Gwynne Park Primary School are extraordinarily. The cleaners, gardener, librarians, education assistants, Aboriginal and Islander education officers, office staff, teachers, leaders, psychologists, social workers, parents, carers, family members, volunteers, agency staff and therapists all understand that to be from Gwynne Park Primary School means to go the extra mile. This attitude distinguishes Gwynne Park from other schools. It drives the school’s levels of care and performance and makes all the difference for the students and the community. Gwynne Park Primary School is not the school you may think it is; it is the school you want to be part of.

All staff at Gwynne Park Primary School—not just the teachers—are dedicated and brilliant, but it starts with leadership. One thing I have noticed in my near eight years in Parliament and visiting all my schools is the importance of leadership to set the tone and culture for a school. Gwynne Park Primary School is blessed with the outstanding leadership team of principal Peter Elstermann, vice principal Sam Prodonovich, and Julie Bolingbroke. Sam is also an outstanding swimmer, who will be competing this year in his second attempt at the solo Cottesloe to Rottnest swim. Good luck, Sam! I would like to quote Peter Elstermann’s reflections on the cultural change of the school. He states —

My school is in a low socioeconomic area with all the associated problems that this brings. My school is not an Independent Public School and as such has not attracted any additional funds to work under this banner. My school’s enrolment over the years has fluctuated between 400 to 650 students represented by many ethnic and cultural groups. About 25% of our student population is proudly Aboriginal. My school had a very negative image and you still get that response from people you are not aware of the change that has occurred over the last 6 years. We were often referred to as GRIMM PS or even worse still CRIM PS.

Over my 40 year career and for the last 25 years of my involvement as teacher, senior teacher, physical education teacher, deputy principal and now principal of this school I have been very privileged to have worked with some great principals that have shaped my development and perception of how a school should be managed and developed. At my school I have always viewed the school as a safe and caring place for all students to be given every opportunity to succeed. The moment you enter our grounds you become part of our school family. We will care for you and your family and provide the best support on all levels that we can muster. We don’t want you to go without or miss out on opportunities you may receive in a more affluent area. We will deal with you behaviours, gain your trust and build your self-esteem. For this to occur, we deliberately set about employing staff that are compassionate and show real empathy. We have an existing solid core of very experienced teachers that continue to be the heart and soul of the school and topped this up with newly appointed experienced teachers, graduate teachers and even relief teachers that joined us over the years and were keen to take up a vacancy. Teachers have taken up leadership opportunities to become Acting Deputies, Senior teachers, Committee Coordinators, Cluster Leaders and Extension program coordinators.

My leadership style is one of a Distributive Leadership Model which allows for staff with expertise and commitment to take on roles and responsibilities across a whole range of areas. My deputies are also pivotal to the school’s success and undertake the management of students at educational risk, attendance, staff relief management, development of information technology and curriculum focus. When all Administration and Office staff are supported by a wonderful team of dedicated teachers and education assistants it is a joy to lead this team of dedicated workers and make significant ongoing improvements. We are proud of our school and face the future with new confidence, opportunity and optimism.

That is an outstanding reflection and it is testament to why Gwynne Park Primary School is doing so well.

Before I move on, I will mention that on the site of Gwynne Park Primary School is the Gwynne Park Education Support Centre, also with an outstanding principal, Jodie Norwell. The Gwynne Park Education Support Centre is co-located with the primary school and is a specialist school catering for children with moderate to severe disabilities. All staff have specialist qualifications to support students with a range of disabilities and complex needs. In 2017, Gwynne Park Education Support Centre successfully became an independent public school. Its current school board

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chair is an educational lecturer at Curtin University specialising in early childhood education and language development. Enrolments are currently 75, which is a significant increase from 53 in 2014. Gwynne Park Education Support Centre was a school of the year finalist last year in the Western Australian Education Support Principals and Administrators' Association Inc awards. Over the past three years there have been six finalists in the teacher categories and it celebrates two recent winners of the WAESPAA Teacher of the Year award.

Last year, Gwynne Park Primary School and the education support centre combined their year six graduation assembly and award morning. Their ability to bring everyone into the one school is testament to their tolerance and empathy. Even though the education support centre is a separate school, the two schools try to work together when possible. At that ceremony, it was hard not to be moved by the way the whole school incorporated the students from the education support centre. There was an incredibly telling moment at the end when the students walked off the stage and out of the assembly area. Students from the Gwynne Park Primary School waited to help students from the education support centre as they came together into twos and walked off the stage. It was truly moving and uplifting.

Gwynne Park Primary School is a story of remarkable achievements. It is a story in which improvement has resulted from a relentless commitment by all—from leadership to staff, to education assistants and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education officers, and to the cleaners and the gardeners and their partners from the community. The story is not a celebration of a one-off achievement, but of years of planning, dedication and implementation by staff, families and students in an area of significant social challenge. The cultural change at Gwynne Park is truly remarkable. It is not a story about individuals, but about the collective will to improve. Cultural change is one of the most challenging things to implement at a school, but Gwynne Park is achieving it. The direction of the school is clear, evidence based and thoroughly supported. People are treated like people at Gwynne Park Primary School. The staff at Gwynne Park go way beyond expectations. Professionally, they jump into innovations, research and extra projects all the time and they are compassionate. They are relentless in their care and support for their students.

A positive school environment is promoted by staff each and every day, and this has been happening year in, year out. This focus on positivity is relentless. Technology is embraced to create engaging twenty-first century classrooms. Literacy and numeracy are a moral imperative at Gwynne Park. Students who are literate and numerate live longer, are healthier and earn more. The staff at Gwynne Park share their success with other schools and communities. Gwynne Park Primary School is not just a school; it is a community. It is a village. In lower socioeconomic areas, in areas of disadvantage, there is a need for a community, a village, to educate and support students. Gwynne Park Primary School students are given the opportunity to do many things. One need only go to the school assemblies to find out the various things that students can do. They are involved in robotics. They are also involved in National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee celebrations. In all the NAIDOC celebrations I go to, the Gwynne Park NAIDOC assembly is by far the best. They participate also in the Dalefest, which is an annual coming together of schools in the Armadale and Serpentine–Jarrahdale area to perform. Last year I had the privilege of attending the Dalefest and, without doubt, Gwynne Park Primary School was by far the best on show. Its students were outstanding.

The school competes in the Eagles Cup and does very well in football. Mr Pass is in the Speaker's Gallery today. It is involved in the Aboriginal football program, the Kelmscott Show arts display, the Spare Parts Puppet Theatre and before-school sport. One of the things that I have noticed between the elite private schools, the so-called Public School Association schools, and many state schools is that students who go to PSA schools have incredible opportunities in sport and extracurricular activities, and it is a given that staff will be involved in those activities. I must say that at some state schools that is not the case and it is hard to get teachers involved in extracurricular activities. That is not the case at Gwynne Park Primary School. The ability for students to participate in extracurricular activities before and after school is immense, and that is due to the dedication of the leadership through to the staff, including the education assistants.

The students have been involved in many dance performances. They have been to see some outstanding performances at theatres in Western Australia. They have been involved in the state cross-country championships and National Science Week. They attend school camps and are involved in the authors' club. Gwynne Park students can be involved in many activities.

I love going to Gwynne Park Primary School because whenever I enter the gates there, I suppose I experience what the students do; that is, a calming, supportive, loving environment. That was not always the case at that school. I have lived in Armadale for most of my life and I know the reputation that Gwynne Park Primary School once had. That has been turned around through the relentless commitment to change the culture at that school. The culture and atmosphere of Gwynne Park Primary School is one of calm, stability, civility, respect and love. I salute the community of Gwynne Park Primary School. I salute the leadership, the teachers, the education assistants, the Aboriginal and Islander education officers, the cleaners, the gardeners and the school community.

I celebrate them all. I celebrate the families and I particularly celebrate the students who have taken on board the opportunities that have been presented to them from the community that makes up Gwynne Park Primary School. Well done, Gwynne Park Primary School. May the school continue with its success.

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Parliamentary Secretary) [9.39 am]: It is my pleasure to talk on the Premier's Statement. I will be talking about issues relevant to my electorate and broader policy issues. I want to wish all members of Parliament a happy Valentine's Day. Someone left chocolates on my chair. That is the second gift I have received today. Given that I am single, I am very happy with that. The first gift was actually from a straight married mate who is the president of the Mount Hawthorn Primary School parents and citizens association. He delivered two bottles of Valentine's wine, so I am getting sympathy! I like this quote about Valentine's Day: "If you're sad about being alone on Valentine's Day, just remember nobody loves you on all the other days either"! Ain't that the truth. Thank you to whomever dropped off the chocolates. As one of the few single people in this chamber, I am glad that someone is feeling sympathy for me.

I will speak on a range of issues both relevant to my electorate and broader. I will speak about the hot issues of education and pedestrian safety in my electorate and also about broader policy issues for small business that affect small business across the state. I will also talk about plastics, which is a major environmental concern, and density. I am particularly concerned by the member for Cottesloe's comments yesterday that seem to be tearing apart the consensus by both the previous government and this government about the need for infill but also his apparent attack on the record of the previous government, particularly the former Minister for Planning, John Day, who was well respected on planning issues. It is disappointing that a fear campaign is now being orchestrated by the member for Cottesloe that really does shred the bipartisan approach to planning and infill in this state. It should be a cause for concern for everyone in this state that this shrill and unnecessary fearful campaign is being put forward by the member for Cottesloe.

Firstly, I want to talk about education in my electorate. There is no doubt that education has been a critical issue for the simple reason that has been discussed previously in this Parliament—we have had a population boom. I doorknock every week in my electorate. It is very evident when I doorknock through the streets of Mount Hawthorn and North Perth that we have had a baby boom. The streets are littered with prams and toys. I have to jump over them in front gardens and on verges. We have had a significant population boom. Of course, this puts pressures on our primary schools and our feeder high schools. That is why I am proud to be part of a state Labor government that has recognised the value of education and is investing heavily in my electorate.

At primary school level, we delivered and opened this year a new \$3.5 million school build at Mount Hawthorn Primary School. That was desperately needed to cater for the large growth in numbers of primary school students. We have also invested in additional facilities as part of local election commitments. We have invested \$450 000 in North Perth Primary School to deliver a new large, extended undercover area, and even down to smaller things such as a \$100 000 nature playground at Kyilla Primary School. We have been investing to enhance facilities at primary schools.

The major election commitment to address the population boom is the Inner City College. The opposition pooh-poohed the Inner City College; it opposed it. It is now very clear that it is overwhelmingly supported, wanted and popular in my community. It was very clear at community forums held by the education department and myself that the community is hungry for the Inner City College. The community is excited about it. People are talking about how to get within the school's boundaries. People are looking at moving so that they are within the school's boundaries. The new principal, John Burke, is outstanding. This puts to bed any of the nonsense by the opposition about the Inner City College. This was the right decision and it is the right decision for my community. I am looking forward to standing with the Minister for Education and Training and the Premier when that school is open for students.

I want to address another hot issue in my electorate—pedestrian safety. It might not sound sexy but, again, it is probably the number one issue when I doorknock every week. Pedestrian safety is a critical issue for my community. It makes sense—we are an inner-city community. Many of the major transport corridors into Perth and the CBD are in my electorate. There is growing density, so there are more people and more traffic. As a consequence, pedestrian safety has become a flashpoint for many residents. It is particularly important for families and parents with young children because they are worried about how they get their kids to school. They are worried about how they can walk to local reserves and parks. I am doing two things. I gave very clear election commitments to the community about pedestrian safety. Three hotspots are major paths. The first was Fitzgerald Street to Woodville Reserve. That has been delivered to the community. The second is Vincent Street in front of Beatty Park, a popular recreation facility. That is about to start construction and will be delivered. The third is for Kyilla Primary School and Charles Street. Unfortunately, Charles Street is a major corridor into the city, so there are things that I cannot change, but we can certainly increase pedestrian safety. Last year, I held a community forum with parents and local residents to discuss potential options. There is already a staffed guard

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crossing there. I have now presented an alternative option of a 24-hour green light pedestrian crossing. The problem with that is that we cannot have that and a staffed crossing—it is either/or. I am up-front with the community on these issues. The design is being done and I will be going out to a final consultation with the community to present it with the information and to ask people what option they want: a 24-hour green light pedestrian crossing or a staffed crossing. That discussion will happen.

I am also going to have a broader conversation with the community over the next six months about other risk spots for pedestrians. I am really interested because the people in my community know best. They walk the streets; they know the problem areas. I am making an appeal to my community to let me know where the issues are. Let me know which areas need to be fixed so that I can work with the City of Vincent and the City of Perth to identify quick wins. Small changes can have immediate effect and we can also develop a longer term infrastructure plan that will require a greater investment. I want to say this on the public record: pedestrian safety can often seem easy to fix but in working with Main Roads WA and local government, it is very clear there are high costs involved in creating new green light pedestrian crossings. At existing intersections, it often requires a significant upgrade, costing anything up to \$500 000, or, if it is a new set of pedestrian lights, it can cost about \$250 000. As members can imagine, it is a challenge, but my message to the community is that I am listening, I am engaged and I am passionate about this because ultimately pedestrian safety is about having walkable and liveable neighbourhoods for our community.

I want to talk about a few issues at a broader policy level. The first is small business. Many in this chamber have said that small business is the engine room of our economy. We know that around 40 per cent of working people are employed in small businesses and that it contributes \$40 billion to the economy. As the member for Perth, having the city districts and many of the popular cafe and retail strips in my electorate, I have focused on championing small business. Whenever I can, I have an open-door policy with small businesses. I will sit down with them to try to cut through the red tape. We have had wins, like Wines of While, a small bar that had to meet ridiculous conditions proposed by the WA Police Force, but we still have a long way to go.

As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Planning, I am focused on the small business approvals processes, because it is ridiculous. It is extraordinary that small businesses that want approval to open have to go through a planning process riddled with red tape. Not everyone realises or understands this process and many small businesses are shocked when this occurs. A person who has in mind opening a cafe, coffee bar or restaurant cannot just go along and buy a retail shop and put it there. In fact, they need to go through a change-of-use planning process. This process can be quite tiresome and costly because local governments have different prescriptions about what is required for that change-of-use process; it might have to go out for community consultation. Then there will be a car parking policy—this again differs from council to council—that states if someone is opening a small bar, cafe or office, they will have to provide a certain level of car parking. The problem with this is that we have inefficient local governments that take a very long time to provide that approval and ridiculous car parking requirements for small businesses. In an absurd scenario, small bars are required to provide more car park space, when we know that people Uber, walk and so forth to the premises. The clincher is that local governments charge a small business anywhere between \$3 000 and \$5 000, or more, if it has a shortfall in car parking. I hear from small business owners that the result of this ridiculous change-of-use process in town centres and so forth is that small businesses can wait for up to six months to get planning approval to change a retail outlet into a cafe. What does that mean for a small business? It means that it has to pay the lease cost for an empty shopfront for up to six months. It may be ready to go, with interiors partly done, but then the business is hit with car parking costs. This is ridiculous, unnecessary and nannyism at its worst.

Some local governments are leading the charge and trying to change the situation. I am lobbying for and advocating that a range of uses should not need planning approval. I suggest that if a person is opening a cafe, restaurant, office, laundromat or other business use under a certain size in a district centre, a town centre or a high street, there should be no planning approvals. This would be a massive win for small business in Western Australia. It would save businesses significant costs. I am working on these changes at the moment. It would ultimately mean that we could save many small businesses a terrible amount of time, energy and cost, because to engage in this change-of-use process, small businesses often have to employ planning consultants, who charge a significant dime, which adds to the burden on small businesses. These changes—we are doing bigger changes for planning reform—can be done by regulation, so the department is working on this. I encourage all members in this chamber to talk to small businesses about getting planning approvals. Small businesses would still have to get health approvals and meet disabilities requirements, but if a business is changing from a retail outlet to a cafe in a town centre, like Albany Highway in Victoria Park, it would not need planning approval. I think this is a commonsense approach. Once we develop these regulations, I hope that members on the other side of the chamber will support this change that will cut red tape for small businesses. I think both sides of politics can agree on this issue.

[Member's time extended.]

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Mr J.N. CAREY: The next policy area I would like to talk about is housing density. I have to say that it was deeply disappointing to see the member for Cottesloe come into the chamber and shred up and destroy a bipartisan approach to infill in Western Australia. It is extraordinary because he is preying on people's worst fears. When I was the Mayor of Vincent, we had honest and open conversations with our community about density. We took people on a journey but we also had to meet their legitimate concerns. What we had from the member for Cottesloe is completely the opposite; he played to people's worst fears. In fact, he attacked the record of the previous state government. John Day was a credible, thoughtful and well-regarded Minister for Planning. It is extraordinary that the member talked about our infill strategy. Can someone tell me who set the state's infill strategy?

Mr F.M. Logan: The previous government.

Mr J.N. CAREY: The previous government and John Day. The misinformed, deliberate approach of the member for Cottesloe shows his 1950s relic thinking. John Day released "Directions 2031", and I quote him —

"Directions 2031 sets a clear vision for the Perth of the future—a city with a vibrant mix of activity areas that bring amenities, employment and education to the people's doorsteps and is well serviced by public transport," ...

...

"To ensure growth of the city can be sustained beyond 2031, Directions 2031 sets a target of 47 per cent, or 154,000 of the required 328,000 dwellings, as infill development," ...

In 2015, the previous state government released the Perth and Peel@3.5 million plan that provided further guidelines for infill development. Again, the credible, well-respected former planning minister John Day noted at the time that 800 000 new homes were needed and 380 000 should be provided in infill strategies. We have this bizarre situation in which the member for Cottesloe claims that it is our infill strategy. There is a bipartisan approach to infill by the Liberal and Labor Parties and consensus that we need to create more diversity, housing choice and so forth. We are in this situation because even though it was his former government that set and reaffirmed the strategy, the member for Cottesloe is captured by the *Subiaco Post* or his mates and has come out and said that all the infill strategies are wrong and John Day was wrong. It is an extraordinary position to take because we know that we have to have limits on urban sprawl; otherwise, we will all have to pay for infrastructure, transport, main roads, water and electricity.

A second thing that shows that the member for Cottesloe clearly does not understand planning policy emerged from his response to the Premier's Statement yesterday. I quote from the uncorrected *Hansard* —

There is completely inappropriate high-rise development. The member who represents Applecross told me recently that a lady who lives in a house there has a 17-metre concrete wall as a boundary fence. That is the infill policy of members opposite. I was told that another person has two 17-metre walls as fences.

The member for Cottesloe needs to go back to school for planning 101. All the planning guidelines we have in this state have been developed over a very long time and have been endorsed by his own former government. He also complains about particular policies and heights and so forth; these are also set by local government. The City of Melville governs Applecross—a Liberal-controlled council. It sets the policies and controls relating to landscaping, so I say to the member that he is criticising his own mates. Yes, we are all concerned about the loss of trees and tree canopies, but up until now it has been local government that has had to set those policies and prescriptions. As Mayor of the City of Vincent I, like the member for Cottesloe, was deeply concerned about the loss of tree canopy, so we went out to the community and developed design guidelines that set the highest requirements in the state for landscaping provisions in density. We did that; other local governments have not.

That is why the state government will very soon release Design WA. Design WA will set basic benchmarks across the state for density done well. Who started work on Design WA? I will give full credit: the previous state government. It understood, as we understand, that we need density but that it needs to be designed well. There are legitimate and rightful concerns about the designs of buildings. Design WA will, for the first time, set landscaping provisions for apartment designs and high density across the state. It will set minimum benchmarks.

The member for Cottesloe is shredding a bipartisan approach. He is not trying to work with the community to address those issues. He is attacking his former government's approach to infill, as set out by John Day. I get the feeling he might be a bit isolated on this issue, because I speak to other Liberals who say they support a reasonable infill strategy, good density, and density done well. Unfortunately for the Liberals, they pre-selected someone from the 1950s, rather than a young, smart woman with great leadership skills and a significant entrepreneurial background.

When the member for Cottesloe gave his first speech I watched all the members of the opposition. I have to say that I saw a universal sigh of relief, because up until then the member for Cottesloe had been touted as a future Premier.

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I watched the members for Churchlands, Bateman, Dawesville and Vasse, and they were all relieved because he gave a speech that was more akin to a speech by a Cottesloe mayor than anything to do with Liberal vision and values. It was dull and boring; it was extraordinary. He dealt with the big issues and then made obscure arguments about Rockingham. Anyway, I will not go into that. I am still getting therapy after listening to that speech!

All I am saying is: let us not shift and change the bipartisan approach to infill. We should listen to community concerns and we should not be dismissive, but at the same time both sides should work together so that we can deliver vibrancy and diversity, get the best designs, and ensure that we do density well in Western Australia. I do not think the majority of members in this place disagree with that approach.

The last issue that I will speak to is, again, an issue that has been very hot in my electorate, and that is the issue of plastics. This state government brought in the ban on single-use plastic bags, and that was very much welcomed by my community. In fact, I ran community petitions on this issue, and it was very clear that there is growing concern about plastic pollution. As a former advocate for the marine environment for five years, working on the Kimberley conservation program, I know that it is of immediate concern.

For a bit of fun on Valentine's Day, I want to say this: I am calling for a ban on those dreaded toys produced by Coles. We first had the Little Shop, which was a blight on parents around Western Australia, because every time they went to the supermarket they were harangued and attacked by their children! It was a source of immense despair for many parents that they were forced to buy what was described very succinctly by a member of my community as "absolute crap"! Now Coles is coming out with a second phase of smaller items, little plastic fruit-shaped toys. Clearly, it works; it gets people through the doors. It is like an addiction for kids, but I want to say this seriously —

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: Are you suggesting only kids get addicted to them?

Mr J.N. CAREY: Okay, that is fair. It is like Lego, except Lego is collectable and long term! I have had this debate; Lego is a very good company around the world, and I admire its efforts. It gets kids thinking and away from TV screens.

I want to say that it is of concern. I have gone to the environment minister about this; I am deeply concerned about the proliferation of these very small plastic items. Clearly, they are a hazard to marine animals. We have already seen media stories about the first wave of significant dumping of plastic toys in the marine environment, and it seems, quite frankly, bizarre that Coles would go out and promote its single-use plastic bag ban but at the same time say, "Hey, have lots of absolute plastic crap and fill your homes with it. It will last three seconds and then you can dump it!" That is what is going to happen, and we know it.

The state government has flagged that it is looking at further bans on plastic. There have been discussions about helium balloons and plastic straws. I argue that we should absolutely look at a ban on promotional plastic items. It is possible to do. I know it is not going to be popular with everyone. I understand that this is incredibly popular with some kids and parents—and, strangely enough, some adults—but when we look at the long-term environmental effects, it is of concern.

Most importantly, it is about the message we are sending to the community: that we want to reduce plastic pollution and that we want to cut plastic from our environment. Coles, one of the major supermarkets in Australia, is doing the opposite. I am not suggesting a boycott of Coles. I shop there myself; I need food, I need to live. But I am encouraging everyone in my electorate to send a very clear message by not purchasing these items and by joining my campaign in the local community to push for a statewide ban of Coles' mini toys.

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [10.09 am]: I rise to make my response to the Premier's Statement. I have the benefit from a position of being the shadow Minister for Planning; Transport; Lands—the three portfolios that are the gifts that keep on giving!

I will start with some of the planning issues that have been raised with me. Of particular concern is a local planning issue. We had a debate in the Scarborough electorate over a period of 10 years about the planning scheme for Scarborough. After many, many years of the community being split on the issue of high-rises, that planning scheme finally had people agreeing to a maximum height of 18 storeys on certain locations. Members can imagine the shock of my community when a proposal from a Chinese company, 3 Oceans, was approved by this government for two multistorey tower developments—one, I believe, 43 storeys and one 33 storeys. That is three times higher than anything else that exists in Scarborough. I think the only people who are happy about this development are the developers, because, according to some of the other developers in Scarborough who complied with the scheme and built their developments to seven storeys as permitted, they have managed to get an excessively generous concession on the scheme with a windfall of around \$150 million. The community has not been given an explanation about what the community benefits of approving something so excessively outside the scheme will be. Yes, there will be some additional parking. We are excited about that

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because probably the biggest issue in Scarborough at the moment is that after the successful redevelopment of the foreshore by the former Barnett government, there are insufficient parking bays on the foreshore and no ability to address that. I will come to that shortly.

The twin towers development is very controversial. We have not had an adequate explanation from the government about why it was approved and what the community benefits are. The only people I believe are happy about it are the boaties, because they can basically map their way to the coast from Madagascar with those towers! They are pretty much the only people who are in favour of that development at the moment. My community is split 50–50. The business community is keen to see the influx of jobs to the local economy, and I guess that in the long term there will be employment there in hospitality et cetera, but some of the people in the real estate industry are concerned. I am advised by the analysts in real estate that we have 30 years' of apartment stock in those buildings. What does that do for the rest of the sites around Scarborough that cannot necessarily expect to get a concession outside the planning scheme?

Other issues we have in Scarborough include parking and congestion at the foreshore. This government's first act when it came to power was to slash \$9 million from the Scarborough redevelopment fund and take off the books permanently the opportunity for two additional roads at the extension of the existing Esplanade in Scarborough. That would have been an extra road in and out to the south and an extra road in and out to the north. Some people were opposed to them; however, by removing the allocated \$9 million, what the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority and the City of Stirling lost—because they are joint partners in the foreshore redevelopment—was a \$9 million opportunity to resolve the congestion issues in another way. That is of significant concern, as is the lack of parking. My big concern about the congestion and parking issues is that Scarborough is a very, very busy beach. There were over 500 surf rescues in one day at Scarborough Beach. I understand we have the record for the highest number of rescues on any beach covered by surf lifesavers. When tourists who cannot necessarily swim but can really easily get to the beach, and when locals from all around the metro area can get to the beach on the public transport network, we have a very, very busy beach. We have a lot of people who do not necessarily know how to read the water. Often rips form very quickly and people get caught in them and need to be taken to hospital by ambulance because they have taken in water.

The big surf at Scarborough Beach is another issue and has resulted in spinal injuries. One thing that triggered the redevelopment of Scarborough was the footage I took, when I lived at the foreshore, of an ambulance with a spinal-injured patient in it. The ambulance took 45 minutes to get from the surf club to the traffic lights, because the ambulance could not go over kerbs or anything like that carrying a patient with a spinal injury. The current congestion at the foreshore may have some serious ramifications for evacuating injured people in a timely manner. I have proposed solutions to the minister that she has not taken up. Main Roads WA could more proactively monitor the traffic signals and when it sees congestion and vehicles backing up at the lights, it could change the sequencing of the lights to let more people exit the foreshore. Some simple solutions could assist the situation.

Parking is another issue. My community is now really concerned about the government's proposal to sell off the Reserve Street car park, which has a couple of hundred much-needed parking bays and is at the northern end of the Scarborough foreshore where the congestion is less of a problem. I have written to the minister and asked her to hold off on selling the Reserve Street car park until other parking arrangements have been made for people who want to visit my beautiful foreshore and my beautiful beach—the best beach in Australia. Those are the local issues I wanted to raise.

When we look at the broader portfolio issues, we can see that the portfolios are in chaos. I am pleased to see that the minister has been stripped of the lands portfolio, because I dread to think what might happen with the commercialisation—privatisation—of Landgate under her watch. We are going to see the government break its election commitment and sell Landgate. It will be selling off Advara and its share in Property Exchange Australia. The government is calling it commercialisation, but it is privatisation and a broken election commitment. The Forrestfield–Airport Link is the first Metronet project that the government has had carriage of. We are in the dark, really, about what is happening on that project. We have to rely on people working on the project to leak to the media and the opposition things such as the tunnel-boring machines breaking down. I believe one of them has snapped in half or snapped a tailshaft or some such thing and has to be dismantled and removed from the tunnel in pieces. We would think that a minister would update the community proactively about these sorts of problems. The project has been delayed by 12 months but the minister claims that there will be no blowout in the budget for the Forrestfield–Airport Link as the first Metronet project. It is hard to fathom how workers can work on a project for an additional 12 months without the budget blowing out. We will wait and see. This minister's ability to manage a project will be tested and we will watch what happens.

We have a big issue brewing with the taxi plate buyback scheme. Taxidriver know they were promised more than what the government is going to deliver and small charter operators have been the meat in the sandwich. The department has admitted that the small charter operators were forgotten about. They were not considered as part

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of the taxi buyback scheme and the changes to the transport regulatory system, so small charter vehicle operators—mum-and-dad operators—are going to the wall and they cannot get a payout through the taxi buyback scheme. They have to collect the levy, but are not eligible to have their plates bought back as part of the scheme. We will be taking up their case over the next few months, because I believe the government needs to make a consideration to those small charter vehicle operators and do what it said it needs to do during the committee stage of the bill in the other place when Hon Stephen Dawson gave a commitment to the opposition that small charter vehicle operators could be excluded by regulation from collecting the levy. They are now advised that that is not the case. We will be following through on that one.

We have a minister who does not like to be transparent and open and who does not like to release information. The Auditor General's report "Opinions on Ministerial Notifications" was released yesterday. It states that the ministerial decision not to provide the taxi user subsidy scheme review to Parliament was not reasonable and therefore not appropriate. It was found that this report had been circulated by the department, with limited confidentiality provisions, internally, to government transport agencies in two other states and to a financial services organisation to assist with implementation, but the minister refused to provide it to Parliament! It is okay to provide it to a couple of other states' transport agencies, but not to Parliament. It is an utter contempt. The minister made the claim that the report was subject to cabinet deliberations and consideration. The Auditor General found that this report was widely circulated when it was released. It was requested in the other place on 15 February 2018. Guess when it went to cabinet, members? It went to cabinet on 17 July 2018. After it had been passed around to all and sundry, the minister, to try to back up her decision not to provide it to Parliament, thought, "I'd better get this into cabinet because I told Parliament it was cabinet-in-confidence." That is not good enough.

The Auditor General's report also refers to the ministerial decision not to provide the February 2018 Metronet Taskforce minutes to Parliament. It says that they were not cabinet-in-confidence and could have been provided and that it was not reasonable and not appropriate to withhold that information from Parliament. The report states —

We also found the Department did not treat the minutes as Cabinet-in-confidence in accordance with the 'need to know' principle outlined in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet's *Cabinet Handbook*. The minutes did not have restricted access controls applied and were easily accessible at the METRONET office.

It goes on —

In our view, the minutes could have been provided to Parliament with the discrete amount of Cabinet-in-confidence information redacted.

That is the way this minister operates. We have to extract information about what is going on in her portfolios by FOI requests and other means.

That brings me to the biggest debacle being managed by this minister, the Huawei contract. I want to set up a bit of a theme with this minister. I call her the minister for media statements. She has released over 300 media statements in the 100 weeks that this government has been in power. There is a theme. We started to smell a rat with the Huawei contract, because there is a theme with this minister. Let us look at the strata reform. On 22 May 2017, there was a media release saying that the drafting of the legislation was being authorised by cabinet. On 28 June 2017, a media release said that the Strata Titles Amendment Bill had been read into Parliament. On 28 August, a media release advised that the strata bill had progressed to the Legislative Council. It is gripping stuff! On 20 November 2018, we were advised that the strata reforms were law following the gazettal of the legislation. Members can see there is a theme: the minister tracks the issues and finds an opportunity to put out a media release. This is one of my favourites. On 10 April 2017, there was a media release about the competition to name the tunnel boring machines. Do members remember that one? On 13 May 2017, there was a big announcement that the tunnel boring machines had arrived. On 27 June 2017, there was another media statement announcing the tunnel boring machine competition winners. On 30 July 2017, we were advised that tunnelling had commenced on the rail link project. On 24 October 2017, there were updates on the progress of *Grace* and *Sandy*. It is gripping stuff! I wonder whether we will see a media release this week about the funeral for one of those boring machines now that we know that one is permanently broken. A media statement released in May 2017 about the public transport radio communications upgrade states —

It will involve installing new towers and poles with new digital-friendly infrastructure. It will be at the forefront of technology, allowing the PTA to take advantage of modern applications.

It also says —

"The shift from analogue to digital has a number of benefits including improved transmission security as well as more flexibility to transmit not just audio but data as well.

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...

“This project will help facilitate automatic train control in the future, in line with METRONET objectives.”

[Member’s time extended.]

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: That was the media release and that is what the minister said this project would facilitate. A year later, in May 2018, we found ourselves asking questions about the progress of that tender evaluation. I believe there was a media release saying that there was a short list of five companies in the process and then nothing—radio silence. We asked whether that issue had been taken to cabinet. The minister has ridiculed the opposition for speaking about contracts going to cabinet. I want to outline the process when I was a minister and the Liberal government was on the cabinet bench. The way it worked was there would be a request for funding to get a scoping document and to prepare for the tender of a contract. For a \$205 million contract like this radio communications system, I would expect that there would be a cabinet submission seeking the authority to go to tender and asking for \$200 million to be allocated in the budget to start the tender process. The agency would then conduct the tender evaluation process and a recommendation would be expected to be made to the minister about the preferred provider. Then there would be a submission to cabinet for a recommendation that the agency progress to enter into a contract with the preferred provider. That is what would be expected. Authority would then be given to the agency to go into contract negotiations and the agency would deal with the contract. When we were in government and there was a controversial or politically sensitive issue, such as the —

Ms A. Sanderson interjected.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I know the member does not like this, but I am not taking her interjections.

The company this government has entered into a contract with has been banned from Japan, New Zealand, Australia and the United States. An employee of the company was arrested in Poland on espionage charges. It has been banned from Taiwanese government systems because it asserts that Huawei could build back doors into its products on behalf of the Chinese government. Prosecutors in the US have launched a criminal investigation into accusations that the company that this state government has a contract with has stolen intellectual property from T-Mobile and other companies. We have found out that Huawei is effectively barred from selling equipment or phones in the US. The United Kingdom, Canada, the Czech Republic, Norway and Japan are also reportedly considering their relationships with Huawei. We have this allegation—it is not proven yet, but it is a serious allegation—that Huawei was selling equipment to Iran, which is forbidden by US sanctions. Huawei’s CFO was arrested in Canada for allegedly defrauding financial institutions about Huawei’s relationship with an apparent subsidiary that sold equipment to Iran. The consequences for violating sanctions against Iran can be severe. This is the company that the state government now has a contract with. I would think that the government would revisit that relationship in light of all this information, but that is not what this government is doing. It has tried to cover it up. It has tried to distance itself from the contract. The minister’s decision not to take these issues about the contract to cabinet has provided a bonanza to the opposition. The opposition has been able to uncover a suite of documents through the freedom of information process that shows the lengths that this government has been prepared to go to to cover up the fact that it has entered into a contract with Huawei.

Earlier, I mentioned this minister’s addiction to media releases. Members can imagine my surprise when a \$205 million contract was announced and there was no media release. What did we find out through the FOI process about the conversations about the release of this information? We know that there was a media strategy to try to minimise the fallout for the government. I will quote from an email sent on Tuesday, 22 May to the minister’s chief of staff. It states —

Assuming we get a thumbs up it would be good to discuss announcement strategy. The two schools of thought are probably:

1. ‘Too hot to handle’ and just let things move along without formal announcement of preferred proponent
2. ‘Nothing to hide’ and formal announcement as a sign of transparency and comfort

Transparency and comfort would be great! One of the Premier’s election commitments was to have transparency and comfort. What did we get? We evidently got the too-hot-to-handle announcement. Members can imagine my amusement with the second email I recovered. On Tuesday, 3 July the minister put out an interesting media release, headed “Two METRONET projects on track to begin construction next year”, but there was nothing to do with the new radio communication system.

Mr W.R. Marmion: It is only \$206 million.

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Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Yes, it is only \$206 million and this is just a “nothing” announcement. All it says is that the government is advertising to the construction industry about the two Metronet projects. Imagine my disbelief on seeing that announcement on 3 July, but nothing about this \$205 million contract for the radio project.

In good faith, the department prepared the media release for the minister headed, “Public transport radio communications upgrade”. We have seen 309 media releases, but not this one, members! It states —

- Government awards tender to replace analogue radio system for Transperth network
- \$136.1 million project will be in operation by early 2021
- Project vital to create a more efficient rail network and support future expansions

It further states —

A joint venture of Huawei and UGL won the contract to deliver the system. The same JV has delivered a similar railway project in Sydney.

It is probably a good thing that this release did not go out, because I believe that is actually not the case. One line in this media release is of concern to the opposition, and it is another area in which the minister is completely lacking in transparency. It reads —

In setting out the security requirements for this project, the PTA sought advice from Commonwealth and State government agencies, and engaged a private security consultant which specialises in high-level cyber security.

Based on this advice PTA has built more than 80 functional requirements for cyber security into the project contract, and will employ robust strategies to ensure the security of PTA systems.

That is the media release that never saw the light of day. That could have been the 310th media release, but the minister did not want to go anywhere near this decision that she had made. I suspect that the reason the minister is very sensitive about this is because of a briefing note for the Minister for Transport that was uncovered by the opposition. This briefing note was prepared on 19 February. It was signed off by the managing director of, presumably, the Public Transport Authority on 27 February 2018. Guess when the minister got around to reading it and approving it? It was nearly four months later, on 20 June. From the opposition benches, I speculate that this briefing note was prepared because the agency likely found, when it started to draft the contract and negotiate with Huawei, that there were going to be some significant security issues with this contract, and it did. That is highlighted in the briefing note to the minister. Had the minister read the briefing note and taken the advice of the PTA to cabinet in February, the contract negotiations might have been stopped. The 17 brains around the cabinet benches might have actually decided that they needed to go back to tender, because the contract was going to be problematic. I expect that some of the smarter ministers like the Minister for Housing would have picked this up. I expect the Treasurer probably would have picked that up too. Instead, the Minister for Transport received a very important briefing note about issues with the \$205 million contract and sat on it for four months. By the time she actually read the briefing note and approved it, the contract had already been signed. We know that it had already been negotiated because of the email dated 22 May, which said that the contract was finalised and ready to go public within the next couple of weeks. It was too late to stop it because the minister did not get to her in-tray in time—that is the problem.

The minister’s next decision was to not be part of the announcement on the contract being awarded to this controversial company. The minister’s decision was that it was too hot to handle. How did the public find out about this \$205 million spend of taxpayers’ money? It was through a footnote placed on the Tenders WA website at a little after 5.00 pm on a Friday in the school holidays. Gee, who is going to be looking at the Tenders WA site on a Friday afternoon in the school holidays?

Mr W.R. Marmion: Only Huawei.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Yes, only Huawei. At the time, the minister was announcing a \$7.8 million upgrade to the Mount Claremont bus depot and a \$500 000 upgrade to the Yarloop train station, but she was missing in action for the announcement of a \$205 million contract for this radio network.

I want to raise another important issue in this briefing note. This briefing note actually details the PTA’s significant concerns with Huawei now being excluded from the 5G network. The PTA have a 4G network, with telecommunication towers used by only the train drivers to speak to operations. Now, a duplicate network is required to support the automatic train control and the emergency network, and then there is also the emergency services communication strategy and the public safety mobile broadband project. All of this was supposed to be accommodated as part of this contract, but not all at once. The first rollout was to get rid of the analogue system and get the mobile communication system set up for the drivers to speak to operations, but the intent was to then upgrade that to a 5G network and build on that for the automated train control, the public safety mobile broadband project and the emergency services communication system. Now we cannot do that, because Huawei has been

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banned from providing those systems and from the 5G network. Taxpayers are now going to have to pay and cop it in the neck because of this minister's stupid, inept decision. They are going to have to pay for a duplicate radio system so that those other functions can be built in—functions which are utterly essential to the expansion of Metronet. We cannot add train lines and not upgrade those systems—it is essential. It is a billion-dollar project to develop those upgrades and it is an essential requirement if we are going to have a safe, functioning network. I will have a little more to say about this a bit later, but some aspects of this briefing note are very concerning.

I will have a little more to say later about the Premier and the minister's handling of this issue. It has been like shifting sands, as we see them move away from statements that were made last year in May, June, July and August to where we are now.

MR D.C. NALDER (Bateman) [10.39 am]: I stand in response to the Premier's 2019 agenda and the speech he made on Tuesday. In doing so, I would like to acknowledge the concerns raised by the member for Scarborough particularly regarding the Huawei contract, and I will come back to that. First, I would like to say that as Western Australians we are blessed to be living in one of the best environments in the world. We have fantastic education, health and judicial systems and the freedom to live our lives in the best possible way. It is something we as members of Parliament need to remind ourselves of because at times it can appear that we are in crisis. Sometimes we need to reflect and say that, compared with most other parts of the world, we are quite lucky. Our challenge as members of Parliament in this environment is to ensure that we work to keep it this way and that future generations can enjoy what we enjoy. It is up to us to ensure we lay the foundations for the future of Western Australia. With that, I would like to touch on a couple of issues that are impacting on my electorate today and then I will talk more broadly about issues occurring across Western Australia.

Firstly, there is my electorate. I heard the criticisms this morning of the member for Cottesloe but I would like to reiterate some of the comments made by him yesterday regarding planning processes. My experience with what is occurring in my electorate is that there is a flaw in the current planning process, and I would like to highlight it. As a bit of background, we have established the Canning Bridge redevelopment precinct. It has passed through the planning process, and did so within our term of government. This is not to be a criticism of the current government but to highlight some of the flaws within the system. I sat in on the community consultation whereby members of my community were advised that the height and density of that redevelopment would peak at 15 storeys. Currently in Applecross, there are apartment towers of 30 storeys. The equivalent to Allendale Square, Highlight 33, and the stock exchange building is the sort of height we are now seeing built in Applecross. My concern is not so much around height. Given the appropriate setbacks and variations, the complaints that come to me from my community do not necessarily reflect concerns about the height other than they were promised that it would not be greater than 15 storeys. When we look at the fine print that allows offsets for public good, there was no clear criteria for what that could be. If we look at the development of the site where there is a 30-storey tower, there are two additional towers of 26 storeys going up on the one site. We are seeing three towers, two at 26 storeys and one at 30. If we look at the public good, it looks as though the piazza, or the driveway into the car park, is the public good on this block, and that is a fundamental concern.

Mr D.A. Templeman: What was that?

Mr D.C. NALDER: It appears that the driveway into the car park of the three towers is the public good.

It allows the developers to get 100 per cent increase of the height allowance for the buildings. There is no clear criteria on the public offset. A 100 per cent increase for no extra public space within that block should be questionable practice. If we add to this—this is where I see the real flaw in the current planning process—each developer has to do a traffic plan. When I asked the council if it had done an over-arching traffic plan for the precinct—the whole area—based on maximum density, the answer was no. The actual traffic planning occurs only in isolation with each individual development. There is no over-arching traffic plan. When I extend that beyond just the traffic management within an area and look at the services, for example, sewerage, water, electricity and phone, I fear that in the pressure will come back on a future state government or the people of Western Australia to foot the cost of the upgrades for the services of this higher density. It is not being taken into consideration in the up-front planning of these precincts. I am not against higher density, particularly around transport nodes. I understand the need to look along highways and transport nodes for this increased density. However, the planning must be done properly. My belief is that it has not been done properly in the past, and it is still a flaw in the current planning system. There is no reason that for a precinct like the Canning Bridge redevelopment plan, this work cannot be done in advance of the approval of the precinct in that we understand the upgrade requirements around sewerage based on maximum density. If we establish the maximum density in a precinct, we should be able to do the transport, water, electricity and sewerage planning—all the utilities that are needed to service the maximum density in that precinct. It should not be left to each individual development. If we do that work in advance on a precinct, the processes can be streamlined for the developers. Developers have come to me and told me that for the City of Perth it takes up to three years to get approvals to build an office tower, yet they can go overseas—

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I am not saying we should live to these standards—and get it approved in a few weeks. If the proper planning work is done beforehand, we can remove a lot of the red tape that allows developers to get on and build with certainty what is required. There is a fundamental concern around our planning process. I am in agreement that if this is not dealt with, it will become a major issue for our communities moving forward.

The other issue raising its head in my electorate is crime and antisocial behaviour. Over the Christmas period, my office was inundated with issues arising throughout my electorate, particularly a couple of suburbs. I acknowledge that the police and the housing department have both agreed to come to a forum in my community to talk through the processes and what rights exist for the people in my community. However, it is something that is a concern. I will share that my house was hit twice in one morning. While we were away on holidays, at 4.30 my son's car was broken into, windows were smashed and things were stolen. It is all on CCTV and 45 minutes later, someone else went into my front yard and stole my son's three-year-old joggers from the front porch. What someone would want to do with my son's three-year-old joggers has me beat because, I have to tell you, I do not go anywhere near them. Someone decided to do that and there is good footage on CCTV of the person who took them. This is symptomatic of issues in my community and I am hearing a lot about the petty crimes that are going on as well as antisocial behaviour. It is something that, to me, is a growing concern and something we need to stay on top of and be strong about.

I want to respond more to the Premier's Statement. I will move on to state issues. I find interesting that the Premier issued a statement on Twitter at the same time as he was making his speech, so he is pretty clever. He claimed there that he has a resolute plan. He said —

These are my priorities as Premier and our priorities as a Government.

A stronger economy. Regional prosperity. A healthy and sustainable environment. Aboriginal wellbeing. A safer community. A brighter future for our children.

When I read these things, the cynic in me suggests he has recently undertaken a poll: these are the issues concerning the community so we better go out and say that this is our focus. My question is: Is this government real? Is it serious or are these simply motherhood statements?

During the election campaign and at the start of its term in government, we heard that jobs were the number one priority, but when I look at this plan I do not see anything about jobs. The issue that we have today is that two years into its government, we still have the highest unemployment rate in the country.

The government talks about how well things are going and how optimistic people are, and some elements of our community and economy have done well. Farmers have had the best year in history. It was not the best for total production, but looking at the prices that farmers received and the money that came through the economy, it was a record year. That is fantastic. Being a farm boy, I am really pleased for the farmers because they have had a lot of tough years and it is fantastic to see them doing well. The mining sector—particularly exploration—is doing reasonably well and is recruiting. Iron ore prices have recovered, so the iron ore sector is quite bullish at the moment.

Those things are great, but sectors of our community are really hurting. The question is: if a stronger economy is a key platform, what is the government doing? A message like this from the Premier is purely a motherhood statement. This government is claiming to care about regional prosperity, but what have we witnessed? We have witnessed the slashing of rural education! The government tried to shut down Moora Residential College and the Schools of the Air. It is an unprecedented attack on rural people. The government has altered royalties for regions funding by shifting it across. The biggest costcutting measure that has gone on in any area has been in royalties for regions, because things that were normally paid from the general consolidated account are now being funded by royalties for regions.

Let us add to that the attempt by the inept Minister for Fisheries on the crayfishing industry. He tried to frame it as being about creating greater local supply when it was really a grab for revenue. He wanted to grab 17.3 per cent of an industry so that the state would own it. Let us look at the history. That industry has seen a reduction in its quotas on the basis of conservation, which it willingly gave up. The state has now decided that that was too conservative and that the quotas can go back up, but the state will own it. It says, "This is ours now and we're going to earn money off it." Fisherman gave it up, but now the government has decided to profit from it. It was an appalling attempt. As Paul Murray aptly wrote yesterday, any attempt to try to push this under the guise of increasing local supply is a lie. This was a cash grab. This was all about trying to profit from an industry. It was a disgusting and disgraceful attempt by the fisheries minister and he should apologise to the people of Western Australia.

Aboriginal wellbeing is on the government agenda. The shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs will probably comment on that later on, but I will touch on a couple of points. The government is saying that it is about Aboriginal wellbeing, but what has the government been doing about systemic abuse in the Pilbara? What is it doing about

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the incarceration rates of Indigenous youth? What is the government doing about suicides in the Kimberley? These are serious concerns and deserve attention, but making a statement about Aboriginal wellbeing is not acceptable and is not good enough. We need to understand what the government will do. The government needs to act decisively, and be clear and concise for the people of Western Australia. That is not occurring at this time.

I have asked what the government is doing about jobs, but what about households? Where are households in this agenda? The cost of living is hurting many households in Western Australia. In an environment of low salary growth, household charges under this government have increased 13 times the rate of inflation. People's wages are not growing, yet their household charges are increasing way above the inflation rate. That eats into their discretionary income. They have less to spend at shops, which impacts negatively on the retail sector, which is really hurting. Where is the government for that?

What about small business? This government likes to assume the mantle of being about business and having a close relationship with business, but we have seen more than 20 000 businesses receive increases in their power bills of over 40 per cent. That is not a government that is looking out for small business. Where is the government on small business?

What about the public service? The government's most important resource is the people who deliver services to the people of Western Australia. The public service has 150 000 people who are servicing two and a half million Western Australians. Where is the government for the public service? It has created disruption through its machinery-of-government changes. It appears as though the government's driver is to cut the number of departments from 41 to 25. That seems to be the whole goal. If that is the goal, it is a flawed goal. That is all I have ever heard the government talk about. At the end of the day, we are concerned about the public service being able to provide services to the people of Western Australia efficiently and effectively, but we are not hearing about that. What support is the government providing to the public service so it can do that in the best possible way? That is not occurring.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr D.C. NALDER: What about agriculture and tourism? During the last election, the Premier said that we needed to broaden the economy. That is another motherhood statement. Many governments talk about it when they come in, but the question is how to broaden the economy. We have seen an abject failure in the area of tourism by the Minister for Tourism. I do not know how this person has retained his ministerial position. Under this government we have seen the demise of international student numbers. The University of Western Australia advised me that international student numbers in Western Australia are down by 5 000. For every four international students, a job is created. For every international student, Western Australia gets on average five international visitors, which is 25 000 international visitors. And we wonder why international tourism has dropped! It is interesting that international visitors to students stay, on average, five times longer than the average tourist. In comparative terms, we are down by 125 000 international tourists. UWA said that we could see where the students had gone—that is, to Adelaide and Tasmania. Members should look at the tourism rates of Tasmania. However, the Minister for Tourism says that the reason international tourism is down is that we do not have direct flights. He should show me how many direct flights there are to Tasmania! Why has its tourism numbers skyrocketed? It is flawed thinking and the government has created this situation. Where is the government on tourism? Tourism has disappeared off the agenda. In its resolute plan for Western Australia there is nothing about tourism.

There is also nothing about agriculture. The government talked about broadening the economy and expanding agriculture, but all we have seen are attacks on the agriculture sector and the live export industry. The government is not setting an agenda that people can have confidence in. We have heard motherhood statements made off the back of what is probably some inane polling that the government has undertaken, but we are not seeing serious action in these areas. We have not seen action in the past on areas it put up as being priorities for Western Australia. We have seen only failure.

I turn to the financials of the state. I found the Treasurers opinion editorial in the paper fascinating reading. I would love to see the government stand on the merits of its own actions rather than trying to mislead people and rewrite history. In his article, Paul Murray made another interesting comment about trying to rewrite history. When the government talks about the \$41 billion that it inherited, it is misleading the people of Western Australia. The audited accounts show that the debt was \$31.96 billion on 30 June 2017, which was three months after this government took office. The last Treasury estimates of the previous government estimated that if that government had been returned, the debt would be around \$28.5 billion, yet the government is using an older Treasury estimate as the basis. Let me tell members why the government is using it. It is because it has not funded Metronet or a lot of the promises and commitments it made. What is really fascinating is what is actually occurring in the financials at the moment. This government is receiving a massive windfall. It talks about the financial management, but let us have a look at it.

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Iron ore prices peaked at around \$93 this week. They are back off at around \$83 or \$84 as of today. I do not know whether people remember that in the first budget the government brought down it issued a revenue writedown shock of \$5 billion. It said it was all because of the previous government's mishandling. Of that amount, \$1 billion was because the Treasurer chose to take a more conservative position on iron ore royalties and downgraded it to \$61. Iron ore prices this year averaged \$US70. If it holds at an average of \$US70—it is currently over \$US80—that alone will add around \$650 million to the budget bottom line. The government also budgeted an exchange rate of 77¢. Currently it is running at around 71¢. That alone will add around \$400 million to \$500 million on top of the royalties. If it holds it above \$80 for six months, there is potentially another \$400 million or \$500 million there. We cannot forecast, but I am just talking about what is coming through at this point in time; it is \$1 billion extra.

What is fascinating about this, because members opposite talk about it, is that we know and the people of Western Australia know that iron ore prices are global prices that are outside the control and influence of the government. We all accept that. However, if I compare the iron ore royalties in 2015–16 to 2018–19, the figure in 2015–16 was around \$3.9 billion. For 2018–19, before the billion-dollar windfall, we are talking \$4.2 billion. There is an anticipated billion-dollar windfall.

Dr M.D. Nahan: For a year.

Mr D.C. NALDER: For one year. The GST for 2015–16 was about \$1.9 billion. The anticipated GST for this year, before the corrections flow through the system, which will add another \$2.4 billion to the financials over the next three years, is \$3.2 billion. If I compare those two revenue streams, on which the government has had no influence whatsoever, the difference between that is \$5.8 billion to \$8.4 billion. It is a \$2.6 billion windfall that this government is now swimming with.

Mr W.R. Marmion: Three lotto wins.

Mr D.C. NALDER: Three lotto wins—I would love to win \$2.6 billion.

My point here is that these are outside. Again, if the government were being honest, it would acknowledge that it has been fortunate. However, it does need to be careful because it is proven that iron ore prices are volatile. The government needs to be sensible with that. The windfall the government is now receiving is not to do with the previous administration; this is the biggest point. If I add into that the additional commonwealth grants that have been provided and look back at the \$5 billion revenue shock that the government in its first budget blamed the former government for, it also included that GST receipts were lower than budget. However, what it misled the people about is that the government was giving a top-up grant on the GST, and it was not counting that. Again, its revenue shock was misleading; it was not being honest with the people of Western Australia. It was misleading people. What is disappointing about the Treasurer is that he is being far too sneaky. It is time this government stood up on the merits of its own actions and its own achievements.

The government wants to talk about a stronger economy. What is it doing for the retail sector? What is it doing for the housing sector? Western Australia has had 10 years of continual decline in housing prices. People's wealth is based on the value of their properties less their mortgage. That is the guiding driver of people's sense of net wealth. We add in flat wages growth and household charges with increases at 13 times the rate of inflation, when inflation is running at one per cent, people's wages growth is running at about one per cent, or \$1 000 a year for a public servant, and household charges are increasing at 13 times the rate of inflation. We say it is 13 times the rate of inflation, but we know from modelling that was provided to the Treasurer for single age pensioners that the increase in electricity alone was 30 per cent. When those sorts of things happen, it negatively impacts on the people of Western Australia. What is the government doing for them?

This government must focus on implementing well. We have heard those motherhood statements, but the people of Western Australia have a right to understand what the government is doing about it. That is where this government has failed. When it talked about its jobs plan, it was all a motherhood statement. At this point, the statement the Premier made on Tuesday is another raft of motherhood statements. Therefore, the government needs to come out and be clear about what it is actually doing, but it also needs to implement well. What is going on with the Forrestfield airport line, the maintenance and the safety issues, now that it has broken down? That is an operational issue about how it manages the contracts and how it makes sure that things are being done properly. Mistakes happen: we do not get judged on the mistake that has occurred, but on how we handle the mistake. All I heard from the Minister for Transport when things started to go wrong with safety issues was her blaming the former government over the contract. Members on her side sat with me when we had a conversation with the State Solicitor's Office about established contracts. She knows that those are not established by the government; they are established by the Solicitor's Office to ensure that the state is supposedly well protected. It was misleading. The issue is, when something comes up, what is the government doing about it?

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The government must look at the cladding issue. There is a risk of a catastrophic fire. We saw an issue arise in Melbourne. We need to know what the government is doing about it.

I refer also to the Carnegie wave farm. Announcing a successful tenderer before it actually undertakes a tender is not good governance. I have talked about the crayfishing fiasco and the machinery of government changes. Now there is the Huawei contract. The minister tried to link me to NorthLink WA. I can categorically assure people that NorthLink was taken to cabinet. It was broken into three stages and taken to cabinet. It was discussed in cabinet, and cabinet provided the approval to proceed with the contract to build the NorthLink project. What I cannot understand is why on earth the minister chose not to take the awarding of the contract to Huawei to cabinet and why she hid behind the department and allowed it to try to keep it all low key and not be involved in the announcement of it.

Amendment to Question

Mr D.C. NALDER: I therefore move to amend the question before the house. I move —

That the following words be added after “noted” —

and that this house condemns the McGowan government for the bungling of the Huawei contract and for intentionally hiding the national security issues from the people of Western Australia

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [11.08 am]: I rise to support the amendment moved by the member for Bateman. I want to pick up on the comments I made earlier. The briefing note I mentioned previously that we uncovered under FOI was prepared by the Public Transport Authority on 19 February and signed off by the managing director on 27 February 2018, but apparently made it to the minister’s attention on only 20 June 2018 when it was approved. There is a four-month time lag between the PTA discovering these issues and the minister reading the briefing note. This briefing note says that the PTA has significant concerns about the contract. I suspect that those concerns relate to the limitations that have needed to be placed on the contract, the 80 or so security limitations, that inhibit Huawei from being part of the other essential components of the Metronet communications program.

This briefing note states that the Public Transport Authority secured two spectrum licences in the 1 800 megahertz band—one for five megahertz and the other for 10 megahertz. The five megahertz licence was procured at a commercial price. The 10 megahertz licence was negotiated at a lesser rate, with a caveat that it can be used only for railway safety and control. The PTA is concerned about what the new long-term evolution technology system will need. It will be capable of voice and data to serve a range of potential railway uses, including short message system, or SMSs; onboard CCTV; ATC, automatically controlling train movements; remote monitoring; passenger information; emergency passenger alarms; public access; data capability for security personnel, including CCTV and live feeds; status of building alarms; and cleaner records. The PTA has concerns about the emergency services communications strategy and the public safety mobile broadband project because of the limitations on Huawei being able to provide these services. The briefing note states —

The PTA is concerned that the Emergency Services Communications Strategy and Public Safety Mobile Broadband Project will seek to utilise radio bandwidth and infrastructure (power, fibre optic cable) required by the PTA for its RSR Project —

The radio services project —

which would significantly affect the delivery of that project as well as future PTA capability and jeopardise the METRONET rollout.

Basically, the briefing note says that because there are limitations on what Huawei will be able to provide in the future—it is not permitted to upgrade to 5G or to be involved in automatic train control—we are going to need a duplicate base for the provision of those services. I understand that may require that taxpayers will have to purchase another radio licence with 10 megahertz or otherwise so that we have a secure emergency mobile network, additional fibre optic cable and additional power. I presume that is what the PTA is alluding to in that briefing note.

Another briefing note from the PTA to the minister of 12 March 2018 outlines options for the minister given all of the risks and issues around security et cetera. The options outlined include proceeding with the current procurement with no changes, recommencing the procurement and amending the current procurement. It states the risks et cetera involved in all of those options. Presumably, the minister took on board that information, and the decision was made to continue with the procurement and the existing contract with the 80 additional security components built into it. It is unclear whether there will be an additional cost to taxpayers, because we have effectively purchased a very expensive mobile communications network for train drivers and the operations centre that cannot be used for anything else. To me, that does not sound like very good value for money.

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A briefing note to the Premier of 2 July 2018 outlines serious issues. When we raised the issue of the briefing note in the house yesterday, the Premier's response astonished me. We provided the Premier with a copy of the briefing note and he said, "I don't know whether I read it or not. It doesn't have my signature on it. I am a very important man. I am a very busy Premier. I see lots of briefing notes and my signature is not on that one, so I don't know whether I read it or not." Maybe he did read it, maybe he did not, but if he did read it, I do not believe he would forget it. To get a briefing note that says —

DPC's concern was that technology provided by the ... Chinese ... may not be able to support a level of security required to support potential future uses of the network, particularly automatic train control ... and public safety mobile broadband (PSMB). An outline of the security-related risks is below:

The second dot point under the heading automatic train control states —

The consequences of interference with ATC could be severe and the protective security of the network would need to be reconsidered to ensure these risks are appropriately managed.

We accept that the government has said that Huawei will not be part of ATC and that is a separate contract. However, I understand that ATC and the other projects would be worth about \$1 billion and we need to know whether it will be \$1 billion plus \$200 million because we have to duplicate the expensive mobile phone system that we now have exclusively for PTA drivers.

I come to the cover-up and the interesting positioning of the language of the Premier and the minister over time. On 14 June, we asked the Premier about this issue. He answered that at the time the commonwealth government had "advised that there were no difficulties." On 14 August, we asked the Premier a question about the Huawei contract. At that time, he said —

I might also add that we received advice from the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, no less, that there were no issues with this contract.

That seems somewhat contrary to what the briefing note describes. The briefing note outlines that there are significant security issues. On 14 August, as a supplementary question, I asked —

Can the Premier confirm that the commonwealth Department of Home Affairs has written to his government and expressed concerns beyond the existing contract awarded to Huawei, including the inclusion of an automatic train control system?

The Premier answered —

I am unaware of what the member is referring to.

If a minister or the Premier was asked a question in Parliament about something as controversial and topical as this, one would think that they would go out and collar the director general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Darren Foster, or their chief of staff or someone else and say, "Get me a briefing note on that issue; I need to understand it." Evidently, the Premier did not do that, or he did it and decided that he was still going to obfuscate. On 15 August, we asked the same question. The Premier answered —

I am unaware of what the opposition leader is referring to.

...

I am unaware of which correspondence the Leader of the Opposition is referring to.

That question referred to the correspondence from ASIO saying that there was no security issue with the Huawei contract—nothing to see here! On 16 August, we grilled the Premier again. At that time, he said that the PTA made the decision. It was not government or the minister; apparently, the PTA makes \$200 million decisions. The Premier continued —

We got advice from the commonwealth government, from the Department of Home Affairs and the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, that there were no security issues involved.

Mr W.R. Marmion: And ASIO.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Yes, and ASIO; he said that again.

Later, the Premier said —

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We did seek advice from the commonwealth government. We got the advice on three separate occasions, as I told the member yesterday and the day before, and the commonwealth government said there was no security threat. I have told the member that two times running.

This week, the Premier and the minister were most unhappy about us talking about Huawei, because they know it is a big \$200-million bungle. It is a \$200-million bungle that will continue to cost taxpayers into the future and there could be, with the accusations internationally that Huawei build backdoors into their systems for use by the Chinese government—I do not know whether that is true, but that is the allegation out there—a problem with the network we have purchased. If there are 80 requirements to manage security for a contract, we are getting into territory where we should ask, “Hang on a minute, should we revisit this decision?” That is what any sensible person would do. Someone buying a house, for example, would not take possession of a house with 80 defects. That is a little bit of how I see this issue playing out.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, we asked the Premier about Huawei and he positioned himself even further from that language. He said that he had verbal advice from ASIO. We asked the Premier to table the ASIO advice and the government laughed at us, but we put a caveat on that. We do not expect the government to make public advice from a security agency like ASIO, but if the Premier says he has advice from ASIO about Huawei saying there is no security risk, we expect him to be able to table a heavily redacted document that has only a small collection of words on it: the agency letterhead, or email, or whatever it might be; the word “Huawei”; and that sentence—“there are no security risks with this contract”. That is pretty simple stuff. I would suggest that the Premier does not have that correspondence, and that is why he will not table a heavily redacted document, from either the Department of Home Affairs or ASIO, to say that there are no security issues.

Then, when we pushed further yesterday, the Premier first of all said, “Oh, I don’t know if I’ve read the briefing note or not.” I found that very interesting. The Premier obviously knew he had been caught out after having said in August that he did not know what the opposition was talking about in respect of risks with the contract, because we uncovered a briefing note from 2 July. Why would the Premier redact the date on a briefing note for a freedom of information request unless he did not want people to be aware of when he had been advised about issues he claimed to have no knowledge about a couple of weeks later, on 14 and 15 August? That could be the only reason for redacting the date. Why would the date that a briefing note was issued be sensitive? My suggestion is that somewhere along the line there has been a request to redact the date, but he got caught out. In an FOI request with lots of documents, there is an index of the documents with the dates, who it was from and who it was to, and then there is the heavily redacted text. Generally, information we get from this government is heavily redacted—some of it useful, some of it not. As I mentioned in the house yesterday, one document I got had three pages of black ink and four sentences. That, my friends, is gold-standard transparency at its best. That is the standard that the Premier sets.

The Premier is now shifting his language away from what he has been saying for months about this contract. He is now saying, “Oh well, I didn’t really have actual advice from ASIO, I had verbal advice.” What does he do? Does he get on the phone to ASIO? Do members think ASIO gives verbal advice over the phone about a company like Huawei? The Premier then attacked the Leader of the Opposition and said he is a foreign national. He is not; he is an Australian citizen. Then he tried to besmirch the reputation of the member for Bateman, drawing him into the banking royal commission, of all things, and suggested that the opposition was out of line to say that the government should not deal with a company like Huawei until all the international controversy was settled. He likened that to the government not dealing with banks, mortgage brokers, insurance companies or John Holland, because the royal commission has uncovered unconscionable conduct on the part of the banks and some of those institutions.

Sorry, but that is a different league. Can members name one bank that has been banned from doing business in a country we are allied with? Has John Holland been banned from doing business in our allied countries? I do not think so. The reason we are so alarmed is that the company we are dealing with has been banned from operating in New Zealand, Japan and the UK. India is considering banning it from its 5G network; the British telecommunications company BT Group is removing Huawei from its 3G and 4G networks, and its 5G rollout will have no Huawei components. That is the level of concern that BT has. One of Huawei’s employees was arrested in Poland in January on espionage charges. It has been banned from Taiwanese government systems because of concerns that it could backdoor into Taiwan’s products on behalf of the Chinese government. US prosecutors have launched a criminal investigation into accusations that Huawei stole intellectual property from T-Mobile and other countries. Australia has banned it from its 5G network and national broadband network. Huawei cannot sell equipment or phones in the US or the UK. Canada has banned it and Norway, Japan and the Czech Republic are considering the level of their relationship. To my knowledge, the banking royal commission did not uncover any Australian banks being caught up in a conspiracy with another company to circumvent trade sanctions against

a terrorist state like Iran. It is not the same thing. To suggest that the banks are in the same league as Huawei is not accurate. We are not comparing apples with apples.

The allegation is that Huawei has circumvented the US sanctions, selling equipment to Iran. Canada is hardly the most right-wing country in the world, and it has actually cooperated with the US to extradite a Huawei chief financial officer, Meng Wanzhou, for defrauding financial institutions about Huawei's relationship to an apparent subsidiary that sold equipment to Iran. That is the allegation. The government should read the US indictment. It is absolutely chilling. I accept that these allegations have not been proved in court, but it is not prudent to deal with a company that has been banned from operating in all our allied countries, including New Zealand, Japan, UK and the US.

I will quote from an article I thought was quite interesting, from an online magazine called WIRED. There was a chilling quote by a telecommunications expert called Jeff Kagan. Mr Kagan basically said that he does not believe that Huawei's reputation can be corrected. I quote from that article —

I don't think it can be corrected," Kagan says. "The only way Huawei gets through this is if some customers and countries decide they don't care."

That is what a telecom industry analyst asserts—that the only way Huawei will get business with countries that have banned it will be if those countries decide that they do not care. That is what we are dealing with in Western Australia—a \$205 million dud, bungled contract from a government that does not care.

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton — Leader of the Opposition) [11.27 pm]: I would like to make some comments on this matter. First of all, this is clearly a systemic cover-up by the McGowan government—both the minister and the Premier, and perhaps others.

Let us go through the story. The government essentially knew in December 2017 that the contract it had let for the radio replacement system had a problem. There were initially five bidders, but by that time they had been culled down to a number, and the lead one was Huawei. The government knew then that Huawei had a security issue. The Gillard government banned it from the NBN and other countries had banned it from other systems. The Department of the Premier and Cabinet people knew that it was likely to be banned from 5G. In other words, "Houston: we have a problem". I might add that there was a second bid. Generally, before going into detailed discussion with the primary bidder, you should make sure you have a backup, second bidder. You always do. That was ZTE—another Chinese operation that has been convicted of espionage and banned from many countries. In fact, it was convicted of breaching international sanctions against not just Iran but also North Korea. The government entered into a contract, but with no backup. The second bidder was no good. The government had a problem with Huawei. The Department of the Premier and Cabinet said, "What the hell do we do?" At that time, the Premier—DPC is his department—should have gone to cabinet and said, "We have a problem. The radio replacement system is essential. The analogue system is going away, so we need a digital alternative." It is not just a standalone system, as government members keep saying; the government has been forced to make it standalone, but it was not intended to be so. All the information from the Public Transport Authority and DPC was that the problem did not lie with the standalone radio control system, which has its issues that need to be addressed, because it is not stopping there—it is going to the automatic train control system and the whole public sector mobile broadcast system, which we eventually want to go to 5G, from which Huawei is banned. There is a problem. What did the government do? First, it covered it up. It pretended that it was just a PTA matter and was a minor issue.

The government got some advice not from the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation but from the section that deals with critical infrastructure within the Department of Home Affairs. That advice has been totally redacted, so we cannot say what the Department of Home Affairs actually said. What I can say is that the government had no communication with ASIO whatsoever. Do members know why? Because ASIO does not advise anybody but its minister and Prime Minister. That is it—ASIO does not advise state governments. The advice the government clearly got was that it had a problem, which is twofold. The first problem is that if Huawei were the successful bidder for the radio control system, that system would not be able to go to the ATC or public mobile broadcasting system, so the best the government could do was to have a standalone system. That means that the government will have to duplicate it, which would incur a higher cost, but it would be done quicker. There is no doubt that Huawei can build it. Historically, it is the cheapest option. But there is a problem. If building that system was all the government was doing, there would be less of a problem, but that is not where it is going to go. The government will be unable to roll out Metronet in a few years' time unless it builds the automatic train control system. It is going to have to duplicate it. This issue will not go away, despite the government's efforts.

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So what did the government do? It has Huawei, which is clearly a security risk. The government got advice from its own consultant and the Department of Home Affairs and came up with 80 caveats to the contract. Why did it need to have those 80 caveats? Because Huawei is involved. Good God—ZTE was there as a backup! Those 80 caveats include controls to stop information flowing—there are to be no emails outside of Australia and all email communication has to go to the PTA. We do not have all the caveats; we just have some examples. In other words, the PTA went to the minister and said, “Minister, we’ve got a real problem, here. What do we do?” Option one was to just go ahead with the contract with no caveats. That was not appropriate because of the security risk. The second option was to start all over again. The PTA said, “That’s a problem because we need this. The analogue system is disappearing. If we start all over again, we might miss that deadline. Importantly, we will piss some people off—Huawei, for instance.”

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I do not know whether we would encourage this language in the house.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I withdraw it.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr T.J. Healy): Please use a different form of words, Leader of the Opposition.

Debate Resumed

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Another way to say it is that we might have international concern by major people. What did the government do? It got in an international expert and discussed it with the Department of Home Affairs, and concocted 80 limiting factors on the contract. Was this debate brought to cabinet? This is an important issue involving a company that is closely linked with our major trading partner. If the government made the decision to go back to the analogue system, it would have problems there. If it continued with the contract, the system would have to be duplicated for the government’s Metronet project. This is a strategic decision for the state. You would inform cabinet. This is all discussed in March 2018. This is all outlined in briefing notes in March 2018 to the minister and the Premier. I guess the only proof that it was not taken to cabinet is that we got this under a freedom of information request. By not taking it to cabinet, the government could not hide it under cabinet confidentiality; therefore, we have it.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: Whoops!

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Whoops! Did the minister discuss it with the Premier? More importantly, the Premier is pretending that he knows nothing about it. It is the Sergeant Schultz response: “I know nothing!” But it was the Premier’s department that provided the advice that this is a strategic issue. Since then, there has been a systematic cover-up by the Minister for Transport and the Premier on this major strategic issue, which involves a \$205 million or \$206 million contract, has the ability to delay the government’s \$4 billion or \$5 billion major investment in Metronet, and has the ability to upset our major trading partner. They did not discuss it in cabinet and pretend it was just a routine effort by the PTA to build it. Going forward, the central issue is the systematic cover-up by the McGowan government. Why did it do that? Both the member for Scarborough and I read out the advice yesterday. The government’s spin merchants came to the government and said, “Listen, there are all these issues here. In terms of the comms strategy, we can take a too-hot-to-handle approach—the hot potato approach—and pretend nothing is happening, or we can be forthright and upright and come out and say what we have done.” Of course, the government has taken the too-hot-to-handle approach. The member for Scarborough, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, laid out that the Minister for Transport turns out press releases faster than most people talk. Indeed, on the day on which she should have announced this, she had a whole bunch of press releases out. A press release was prepared for the minister, but she did not take it up. They chose not to communicate.

The Premier was given a briefing note prior to the signing of the document, but he says he knows nothing about it. We asked him twice: “Have you seen a briefing note that says there is a direct connection between the radio control system and the ATC?” He said that he knew nothing about that document. That was on 14 August last year. We asked him the next day. We said, “Listen, you have had 24 hours to get a briefing on what you knew or did not know.” I thought that was how we worked in this place. It was legitimate for the Premier to say that he could not remember that specific one, so we came back the next day and asked the same question. He pretended he had never seen it. Yesterday, we referred to the briefing note; in fact, we gave it to the Premier. He said, “I see a lot of things in this world. Yes, that was to me, but I did not sign it. Therefore, you cannot pin it on me. You can’t prove I read it, because I did not sign it.” The role of this place is largely to hold the government to account for its decisions. When an accusation or statement is made, one goes and checks. What did the Premier know about a major contract of strategic importance for the state back in August last year? The public wants to keep the government accountable through the opposition and backbenchers. We asked a question and the Premier should

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have checked up on it. But six months later, at the start of Parliament this year, he said, “I can’t say if I saw that or not. I did not sign it. I know nothing.” That was what the Premier said.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: He should have read the briefing note. It’s his job to read it.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: He was briefed repeatedly. The person who received the document was Darren Foster, the head of the Premier’s department. He is not a slacker; he told the Premier. His former chief of staff, and now head of his department, was advised for months on end on this issue. He is thorough and competent—at least in some ways—in keeping his minister informed on this issue. This is seeking to follow. It is too hot to handle. Let us have plausible deniability of knowing anything. Let us have plausible deniability of knowing nothing. That is the way this government is being run. The Premier is trying to handball everything. He is trying to blame the commonwealth by saying that the commonwealth gave the government a clear assurance. It did say that this government has a problem with Huawei. Everyone knows that. The member for Scarborough outlined it thoroughly. All the world knows there is a problem with Huawei. There is a problem with the application of Huawei in the government’s project. That is why it put 80 limitations on the contract—for security reasons. It would not have done that if there was not an issue. That alone should have been brought to cabinet. Some of those conditions are onerous. The details of them have been redacted; we have been given only a summary of them. The details have been redacted because there is evidence elsewhere that the security limitations implemented by the Public Transport Authority, which, by the way, is not a specialist in security protection, might not be adequate—at least for Huawei.

The commonwealth also would have said that any aspect of infrastructure that Huawei is involved in cannot be included in the automatic train control and the public sector mobile broadcasting system. That information has been redacted. What do we take from that? We know that the 80 factors cost an additional \$15 million. Treasury gave the government an extra \$15 million for that. I assume that that is included in the total of \$206 million that we know about. What we do not know, and we expect the minister to tell us, is what the implications for the ATC and the public sector mobile broadcasting system will be because Huawei is involved in this project. What is the monetary impact of that? The minister said yesterday that the government has not yet done a business case for the ATC and therefore she knows nothing. She is going to try to hide that, but we know, as does the public through us, that she has just increased the cost of Metronet significantly and has potentially caused significant delays to it. It is all because of a cover-up. Why is there a cover-up?

The world is struggling with Huawei. It is the largest provider of this type of technology in the world. It is a very low cost firm. It provides competitive technology. Everyone is trying to work out how to deal with this issue. It is not a controversy here. Cabinet would have looked at it. We think that if cabinet had looked at it, wise heads in Treasury would have said, “It is cheap and we like that”—they always like the cheapest—“but what are the downstream effects of it and what are the costs into the future?” They would have looked at it and said, “Slow down or stop.” The police, who will be in charge of the public sector mobile broadcasting system, said, “What the hell are we doing? We want to integrate all the different networks into the public sector mobile broadcasting system, including the PTA’s system, which is a massive system, because we are looking at security, particularly in emergencies, and some aspects might be out for various reasons and we want access to all of it.” The police would have said, “Wait a minute; you’re putting \$206 million into infrastructure that will be excluded from our remit, our coverage and our system. Why are you doing that?” The police would have complained and the responsible minister would have represented that view. Other wise heads would have said, “Wait a minute; why don’t we just step back, make sure the analogue system can remain and start all over again?”, which was one of the options that was put to the minister.

There are alternatives. The minister keeps saying that the New South Wales radio control system uses Huawei and UDL, the Australian firm. That is true, but it does not have a 4G system; it was done some time ago and it would not have done this. Victoria has recently put in a new system. It chose Vodafone and Nokia. It chose a different route, a more secure route, and a system that can persevere and provide a wider range of services into the future. It chose wisely. We have been told that Vodafone and Nokia were not bidders. We were told that Optus was, but it dropped out for some reason. Ericsson dropped out for some reason. Essentially, the government was locked up with two firms that it should not have gone near.

Now Huawei has been confronted with serious indictments in the United States, which brings into question its ability to participate in Australia more widely. The government is looking at saying to Huawei, “We’re going to have to reconsider this deal. You might not be able to deliver.” Huawei has said that it can deliver, and it is probably right. We know the government is looking for a pathway to get out of this. If that happens, will this not be a shemozzle? Will this not be a serious failure of decision-making? It has been brought about by bumbling, a lack of due process in bringing it to cabinet, and hiding from decision-making rather than confronting it. It is a cover-up. It is too hot to handle. Unfortunately, this is systemic in the McGowan

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government. We saw it with the crayfish industry. The reality is that a rogue minister went off and did stupid things, but the essential nature of the decision was a great big cash grab in trying to steal, essentially, additional capacity.

Mr M. Hughes: Steal?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Steal the additional growth. Based on the price of the pots, the industry was valued at between \$1.3 billion and \$800 million. That is why the Treasurer was on the phone promoting it. It was a great big cash grab. Then when the proverbial hit the fan in January, the Premier said, “I thought this was just to get more crayfish onto our plates in Perth and have a festival. I didn’t know it was really about nationalisation.”

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport) [11.47 am]: I will not spend too much time going through all this because we have gone through it at length over the previous two days. Needless to say, it was another 40 minutes of absolute mistruths and misleading this place through the comments that were made. No new information was provided today. This was just another opportunity for members opposite to show that they are completely irrelevant to modern WA. This was pretty much another example of that. They misled and misled and misled. They misled about what the Premier said yesterday. They misled about 27 February. They said that Huawei was referred to, which it was not. They misled about the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation. Everything they said basically had no truth. They got some FOI documents. When information was redacted, they just made it up. I am all for running good motions in Parliament. That is part of what we do in this place, but when members get documents that are redacted, they should not make it up and then base their whole attack on something that they made up. That is what they have done. They basically need the facts or they should not bother. If the whole attack is based on making things up, it does not work.

As I have said on numerous occasions, we have gone through the checks and balances. If members opposite want to talk about commitments and waste, why did they spend \$8 million in 2013 on the spectrum with no plan to actually deliver it? As I have said, I can go through their claims about Huawei being banned from all these countries, but, honestly, it is not worth it, because everything the member for Scarborough has said is false. Yesterday, I went through some details and the Premier went through some details, but, frankly, the member has nothing to say that I need to address because it is all false. The Leader of the Opposition sits there with that crazy grin of his and laughs when he knows that their argument has fallen absolutely flat.

I will talk about the last mistruth and misleading statement by the opposition. Members will remember that there has been a lot of commentary about my involvement in the announcement of the upgrade to the Yarloop train station. Here is a picture from the announcement and I was not there. I was irritated by it, but I was not there. In the photo is the member for Murray–Wellington, the member for Bunbury and the Premier. Richard Sellers was there, but I was not there, and that irritated me.

Members opposite, including the member for Dawesville, have come into this place and made up all these allegations. They said that this briefing note says something when it does not. Then they said that the briefing note was prepared before Huawei even got the preferred-tenderer status and that this whole note was about Huawei. They have made these claims that do not add up. Like I said, they can run motions in this place and prepare their documents, but they cannot just make it up. It is just grubby little politics, because they do not know how to claw their way back from receiving only 13 per cent of the primary vote at the last election. They have continued contempt for the Premier of the day and the government. They still cannot suck up the fact that they lost the last election. They think they should be on this side of the house—that they are some sort of monarchy in exile that deserves all this —

Several members interjected.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Look at the quality of the response. It is just rubbish, and that is the source of the problem.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Okay, I am the source—keep going. What else does the Leader of the Opposition want to say to me?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister, I assume that you are seeking to take interjections.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, he can say more things to me—go on. What else does he want to say?

The ACTING SPEAKER: I might ask you to direct conversations through the Chair.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: How about, “take responsibility for the decision”. Say how much extra it is going to cost and answer the issues.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: How about dealing with fact? How about coming in here and not making it up?

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Dr M.D. Nahan: Please do.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: How about dealing with fact?

Dr M.D. Nahan: Please deal with the facts of the matter.

Mr D.T. Punch interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Bunbury, I call you to order for the first time.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Leader of the Opposition has come into this place and made it up as he went along. He has made some horrible comments about the Premier again, and about me and all of us.

Mr W.J. Johnston: That is because he is a foreign national.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Apparently he is not now, so he must have retired his debt. Is the member a foreign national?

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We are not supporting the motion today. If there was anything worthy to address, I would have gone through it point by point, but I am not going to keep standing here to address the mistruths and misleading statements made by members opposite.

Division

Amendment put and a division taken, the Acting Speaker (Mr T.J. Healy) casting his vote with the noes, with the following result —

Ayes (17)

Mr I.C. Blayney	Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup	Mr J.E. McGrath	Mr P.J. Rundle
Ms M.J. Davies	Mr A. Krsticevic	Dr M.D. Nahan	Ms L. Mettam (<i>Teller</i>)
Mrs L.M. Harvey	Mr S.K. L'Estrange	Mr D.C. Nalder	
Dr D.J. Honey	Mr R.S. Love	Mr K. O'Donnell	
Mr P. Katsambanis	Mr W.R. Marmion	Mr D.T. Redman	

Noes (34)

Ms L.L. Baker	Mr M. Hughes	Mrs L.M. O'Malley	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Dr A.D. Buti	Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr P. Papalia	Mr D.A. Templeman
Mr J.N. Carey	Mr D.J. Kelly	Mr S.J. Price	Mr P.C. Tinley
Mr R.H. Cook	Mr F.M. Logan	Mr D.T. Punch	Mr R.R. Whitby
Ms J. Farrer	Mr M. McGowan	Ms C.M. Rowe	Ms S.E. Winton
Mr M.J. Folkard	Ms S.F. McGurk	Ms R. Saffioti	Mr B.S. Wyatt
Ms J.M. Freeman	Mr K.J.J. Michel	Ms A. Sanderson	Mr D.R. Michael (<i>Teller</i>)
Ms E. Hamilton	Mr S.A. Millman	Ms J.J. Shaw	
Mr T.J. Healy	Mr Y. Mubarakai	Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski	

Pairs

Mrs A.K. Hayden	Ms M.M. Quirk
Mr V.A. Catania	Mr J.R. Quigley

Amendment thus negated.

Consideration Resumed

MR S.K. L'ESTRANGE (Churchlands) [11.58 am]: This has been a very lacklustre week for Labor, and I can understand why. The Premier's Statement on Tuesday was supposed to inspire, motivate and fire up his backbench to man the gates and to get ready for the year ahead, but we found three of his members having a kip. They were counting sheep. Three of them were asleep, and that did not include the Minister for Sport and Recreation or the member for Kalamunda. Three other members were having a bit of a kip while the Premier was on his feet. We looked up to the media gallery to see who had bothered to listen to the Premier's Statement, but no-one was there—crickets; that is all that was there. This awe-inspiring effort by the Premier to motivate his backbench and the people of Western Australia by outlining what they can look forward to from the government of Western Australia for 2019 was absent of any motivation. There was no motivation. In fact, two key elements of the Premier's speech

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that he took to the last state election were missing. Going into the 2017 election, he said the number one priority was a plan for jobs. Where was the issue of jobs? He brushed over it by saying that he had brought in the Western Australian Jobs Bill. However, we all know that that jobs bill, which became legislation, was a vacuous piece of marketing spin. We all know that if tested, it would not stand up to scrutiny under national law or under the Council of Australian Governments agreement this state has with all the other states. We cannot exclude someone from going for a job in Western Australia because they are from somewhere else. It is that simple. We cannot exclude a business from bidding for a contract in this state because it is set up in another state or in New Zealand. These are facts. He brushed over his number one priority by saying, "I dealt with it through a piece of legislation" but it was rubbish.

The second issue missing from his Premier's Statement, his plan for 2019, was how he was going to keep down the cost of living for ordinary hardworking Western Australians. Where was that in his Premier's Statement? It was missing—not even there. We know why it was not there. Why it was not there is pretty obvious. His Treasurer, who shows absolutely no compassion for the people of Western Australia, cranked up power prices in a 12-month period by almost 18 per cent in the government's first two years. Over 10 per cent of that was on a fixed charge, so even if people turned off all the power in their house and froze in winter, they would still be hit with a 10 per cent extra charge. That showed complete and utter disregard for what the Premier and the Treasurer went into the election saying they stood for. The Premier made no mention of how he would keep down the cost of living for the people of Western Australia who are doing it tough. Water rates are up 12 per cent, public transport over 13 per cent, vehicle charges over five per cent and the emergency services levy over 13 per cent—all when the Treasurer and Premier both went into an election saying they would keep increases to the rate of inflation. For those opposite who are not fully aware of what is going on there, inflation is around one to one and a half per cent at a time when wages growth is stagnant. What the government is doing to the people who put them in those seats is taking money from them when they can least afford it. At the same time, the Premier has been going on and on about the government's grandiose plans for Metronet and that sort of thing. They are not looking after them. Furthermore, not only is he not looking after them, the Premier's ministerial cabinet dream team—I can see the start of some rumblings on the back bench—is not doing too well. It is becoming a nightmare for the government. The Minister for Water; Fisheries—for goodness sake—should be put out of his misery. He wants to be sacked; we can see it in his face! He has had enough.

Dr M.D. Nahan: White flag up.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: We can see it. He sits over there all forlorn—"It is all too hard; kill me now; get rid of it; get rid of the pain, Premier." Then there is the Minister for Regional Development. No-one knows what she is doing. She is flying around to Albany and back; she is all over the place. Admittedly, she is the Minister for Regional Development and it is a good idea for her to get out to the bush and have a go at some things. We are not saying she should not be doing that. We expect her to be doing that. What is she doing with the Carnegie Clean Energy wave farm? What is that about? We know she was on a board of a company that became another company that had something to do with it, and that will play out in the fullness of parliamentary time no doubt. The Premier has a real problem there.

The one minister in cabinet who was happy over summer was the Minister for Education and Training. Do we know why? The summer of 2017–18 was her summer of discontent, so she was very happy to take a step back and let the Minister for Fisheries take the heat. She is still out there and the people who worry about education are still very worried. Then of course, there is the Minister for Tourism who does not know where the tourists have all gone. Then there is the transport and planning minister, who is caught up in issues of hiding all the briefing notes around Huawei. It goes on and on.

What is fascinating is the backbench and the member for Armadale, for example, who has, I think, a PhD from Oxford University.

Dr A.D. Buti: You have been reading my LinkedIn.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: He has a PhD in law from Oxford University. He is Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. What does he have? He has about eight and a half years' experience as an MP. He has been on all sorts of boards and things. What does one have to do to get on the front bench on the government side? He needs to go out and do another PhD!

Dr M.D. Nahan: He runs marathons.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: He runs marathons—runs to Parliament from Armadale. He is being ignored.

The member for Baldvis might look like a new MP, but he stood in the 2008 and 2013 elections. From memory, he was part of Carpenter's dream team. Is that right, member for Baldvis? He was a lead reporter for Channel Seven. What has happened to him? "We'll leave him out there on the back bench." You guys need to tap your Premier on

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the shoulder and say, “Mate, move ‘em on. Come on, you’re doing us a lot of damage.” Then there is the member for Maylands, who is doing a top job as Deputy Speaker. She is having a good shot. Look at her CV. She has a psychology degree, has worked for the National Native Title Tribunal and was a shire councillor.

Ms R. Saffioti: You’ve been on LinkedIn.

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: I have been having a look around. For six years, she was head of the Western Australian Council of Social Service. What on earth is the Premier doing demotivating the people of Western Australia and promoting all these incompetent ministers? It does not make sense. The members for Armadale and Baldvis need to be promoted. They need to sort out that mess, for goodness sake. We have a Premier who lacks vision and a Treasurer who lacks compassion.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: You got left alone. We have a water minister who is off his socialist leash and going crazy with his University of Western Australia union politics. He has gone crazy; he has gone rogue.

An opposition member: Crayfish for the poor!

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: That is right; every person struggling in Western Australia wants a crayfish. Here is a tip; 43 per cent above the cost of recovery for water is what people want him to get rid of. They are not interested in a crayfish sitting on their plate. That is what we are dealing with. It is just bizarre. I can tell members right now; the Premier has no vision for Western Australia. What is it? Does anyone know?

Mr W.R. Marmion: Jobs.

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: No; he got rid of that. Nothing! Come on, Labor members; what is their Premier’s vision; where is he taking the state? He gave them his statement at the beginning of the week.

Mr M. Hughes interjected.

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: Kalamunda is awake.

What is the Premier doing? He does not have a vision. He has spent the last two years cutting ribbons for our projects; our vision—transforming the City of Perth, transforming regional Western Australia. That is what the Premier has been busy doing in the last two years. He has not been writing a strategic plan for the state for the next 10 years. That is absent from his speech and from his behaviour. Members opposite need to have a real think about that. Their lead over us in the polls is being slowly chipped away. These things do not happen overnight. The Premier is lacklustre. He has been opening the Karratha Health Campus, the Perth Children’s Hospital, Yagan Square, Perth Stadium, Ningaloo Centre and Auburn Grove Station. I heard him talk recently even about Elizabeth Quay. I think the Minister for Planning put out a media release on Elizabeth Quay saying, “Isn’t this great? We are creating jobs at Elizabeth Quay.” She did not even want Elizabeth Quay.

Ms R. Saffioti: It wasn’t me.

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: It was her media release. I tweeted it. It has her little photo on it.

That is the extent of the vision of the Premier and his cabinet—to open the former government’s projects but have no plan for the future and make it hard for Western Australians with increased fees and charges. That is all it has done in the last two years—nothing else.

One of the real problems is that he has backed himself into a corner with his transport and planning minister on his Metronet plan, which is, essentially, an extension of the former government’s public transport plan.

Mr D.T. Punch interjected.

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: Member for Bunbury, one of the fundamental aspects of planning for transport in Western Australia and particularly in Perth is looking for what will be needed based on population changes, what can be afforded and the government’s priorities. One thing has really been missing. The government has wedged itself as a political entity by focusing all its efforts on this Metronet plan at the expense of the key frontline services of health, education, and law and order. It is forgoing the three fundamental responsibilities of government for its Metronet plan. We had a plan to write down debt, but the government is ramping it up with this plan, which it has yet to put in a budget. We will be looking forward to this year’s budget. The government is doing this at the expense of a portfolio that is very close to my heart—that is, health.

Health is an important and significant area because every Western Australian, regardless of age or background, requires a good health system. When you are healthy, you do not think much about it, but when you get crook or one of your family gets sick, you need that health system to step up. The government is failing to provide an adequate health system for the people of Western Australia.

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King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women was targeted by the Australian Medical Association of WA as being not fit for purpose. What is the government's plan for King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women? We are yet to see it. Members who have had an opportunity to visit it know that Graylands Hospital is archaic. The staff in these facilities are outstanding; they do an outstanding job, but the facilities are well beyond their use-by date and need to be upgraded with the latest technologies and approaches to medicine, particularly for mental health at Graylands. Royal Perth Hospital is a very old hospital, so it consistently needs upgrades. The government needs to invest in the infrastructure of our hospital and health system. In our existing hospital infrastructure that was built under our government—for example, Fiona Stanley Hospital, which is an outstanding hospital—demand is already exceeding supply. When demand starts to exceed supply in our existing infrastructure, problems start to arise. There are no bigger problems than one that was recently reported in *The West Australian* under the headline “Can you spot the patient?”; it read —

Mum given bell & dumped in storeroom overnight

That was at our state-of-the-art Fiona Stanley Hospital! She was ill; she started vomiting. In the storeroom, she rang the bell that she had been given, but nobody came to her so she had to find her way to a corridor to find a nurse to get help. The nurses do an outstanding job, but when they have no choice but to put somebody in a cupboard, something is wrong. The Premier stands in here going on about Metronet. How about before he signs cheques for Metronet, he starts signing some cheques that invest in our hospital infrastructure so that examples such as this woman who was put into a storeroom do not become the norm? When they become the norm, it will mean that the government has let down the people of Western Australia in a very bad way.

I can tell members about something that came out recently in one of our regional hospitals in Geraldton. The headline was “Gran, 84, left on hospital floor”. The article has a picture of her on the floor with a blanket put over her. Nurses, doctors and patients were walking up and down while this poor lady was on the floor in pain. They could not even put her on a trolley. The government says that it has fixed Geraldton because it has a plan to build a new Geraldton hospital. But that plan is not until 2020–21! People are hurting now.

Dr D.J. Honey: They might have to wait a while.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: They might have to wait a while. It is not good enough!

The government always has an answer and a response, and always puts spin on it. The cold hard truth is that people are not being looked after in the health system that this government is responsible for. There is a very sad situation in Kalgoorlie. An article with the headline “Mental health alert spurs budget plea” stated —

Kalgoorlie–Boulder Mayor John Bowler says it is “clear” budgetary restraints on Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital's mental health unit must be lifted in the wake of a damning report that found it was “not a place of safety” for young mental health patients.

It is not safe; that is unbelievable! In that same article we found out that some nurses were crying because they were putting a tranquilizer that they thought could kill a horse into some of those patients—some of them children—to try to calm them down. It is absolutely appalling! Those are stories of real people.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Members opposite love to talk about billions being spent on their Metronet line from point A to point B. However, what really matters is not whether somebody decides to hop on the train when it is eventually built, but a good and safe healthcare system with hospitals that work. That should be the government's number one priority.

Hospital performance statistics under this government's watch have been deteriorating at an increasing and alarming rate. I will give some quick examples. The emergency department access target is a nationally agreed target set by all governments of the Council of Australian Governments. The agreed target is that 90 per cent of patients be seen within four hours. Do members know what? None of our general hospitals are achieving it. The specialist hospitals, such as Perth Children's Hospital and King Edward Memorial Hospital, occasionally meet it. None of the other hospitals are meeting it. In fact, some hospitals are often in the 60 per cent to 70 per cent range, which is over 20 per cent below the national target set and agreed to. Guess what the Minister for Health said last winter when those appalling wait time blowouts occurred?

Dr M.D. Nahan: The flu!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Correct! He said it was the flu season. It scares me to say this, but the rocket scientist Minister for Water; Fisheries was the acting Minister for Health over Christmas. Can members guess what he said? He said it was due to heat. The health minister said it was due to the flu in winter and the acting health minister said it was due to heat in summer. Guess what! A year has four seasons and the government is not reaching its target in any of those. It should stop looking for excuses that are attributed to a season and just fix its hospitals.

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Mr M. Hughes: Stop shouting.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I have kept you awake. That is something.

Another statistic worth looking at is the eight-month waitlist—and it is growing. The government will not release data on this. The last data released on this was at the end of 2017. Back then, there was an eight-month waitlist to see a specialist to work out whether a patient needed surgery. People who are sick and worried about needing surgery have to wait for over eight months to see a specialist to find out whether they need it. That is appalling. What is the government doing about that?

Ambulance ramping is increasing. On one day last year, 13 August, there were 168.7 hours of ambulance ramping outside emergency departments, which is the third worst figure in seven years. We thought that was bad, but on 12 November last year there were 187.7 hours. On 10 December, there were up to 194.8 hours. To put that in context, on 10 December, 64.4 per cent of patients had to wait longer than 20 minutes in an ambulance outside an emergency department. If we play that back, what does that mean? It means that ambulances are not out there ready to go to people who need them because they are stuck outside an emergency department holding a patient who cannot get into the emergency department because it is full. That is not good enough and the statistics show us that it is getting worse. What is the government's plan to fix that? It does not have one, and that is not good enough. That should have been in the Premier's Statement—a plan to make the health system better.

Just recently we saw a very alarming statistic—a 55 per cent increase in assaults on nurses in our hospitals. That figure is from January to June 2017 compared with January to June 2018. That is a 55 per cent increase in nurses being assaulted in those two six-month periods. That is in the media today. The media are asking the question: what has gone wrong? I will tell members what has gone wrong. Some people will focus on the security of nurses, who do an outstanding job—we get that—and they say that an increase in security guards is needed. That is targeting the symptom, not the cause. The cause of this problem is a lack of ongoing investment in our hospitals to ensure that they can deal with demand so that they can get people through in a timely fashion, so that people do not overheat and snap and create the dramas for our nurses who are trying to help them. The government needs to invest in and resource our hospitals appropriately and do something to make the hospitals safer for our nurses. That is what it needs to do. But what does the Premier do? He is not doing any investing; in fact, the government is doing the opposite. It stripped \$201 million out of the hospital system in the 2018–19 budget: “\$201 million—we'll take that.” Then we find out from the annual report of the North Metropolitan Health Service that it planned to strip \$300 million from that health service. We found out that because the actual spend from 2017–18 compared with the planned spend of 2018–19 was a difference of \$300 million.

We then looked at the activity-based funding model, which is an agreement between the states and the commonwealth. The commonwealth is chipping in extra money. This mob opposite was taking out \$299 million for activity-based funding in our hospitals. How is that going to have an effect on our health care and hospital system in Western Australia? It ain't going to fix it, is it? It cannot be used as a cash cow when it does not have any cash and it has to deliver a service. That is what the government members are doing, and their constituents need a good health care system, just as ours do. The Premier needs to think about that.

Mental health is an area that requires much more effort and attention from the government. Only 2.3 per cent of the Mental Health Commission budget was allocated to prevention activities in the 2017–18 budget. Prevention is all about safety; the safety of patients and trying to keep people safe. Do not let suicide be an option for people. Prevention is pretty important. In the 2018–19 budget estimate, prevention accounted for only 1.9 per cent of the Mental Health Commission budget. At the same time as the government was making decisions to cut spending there, we heard that we were the worst performing state in Australia for an increase in the suicide rate. Would members not think that that is a pretty simple key performance indicator to look at? If we are the worst, surely we should be doing something about it? But the only thing the government is doing about it is reducing the spend. That shows a complete lack of compassion. I will tell members what else. We know that a large number of mental health patients have alcohol and other drug issues relating to their mental health concerns. What did the government do to the Meth Helpline last year? It cut \$154 000 from the Meth Helpline. An amount of \$154 000 in an \$8.8 billion health budget is not even a correction. Why would the government rip funding out of that service? It means 10 shifts a week less. The government did it at a time when the calls were increasing and one in four calls was going unanswered. This does not make sense. It shows a complete lack of compassion and a complete lack of forethought for what the government should be trying to do to support people in Western Australia who have mental health needs, and particularly the parents out there who are not interested in the government's plan to make a new you beaut methamphetamine prison. They want to keep their kid out of prison. If they suddenly find out that their child has dabbled in meth, they want to know straight away who to call, what they can do, and how they can get them off it quickly: “Where do I get the support? Oh, I can't get through.” That is because the government whacked \$154 000 out of the Meth Helpline. Well, that was a good idea! Government members should be ashamed of themselves. They should all be knocking on their Premier's door and saying, “Stop it! Fix our health and mental health system!”

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 14 February 2019]

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Dr Tony Buti; Mr John Carey; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Shane Love

I am sorry for having to bring such dire news to the chamber today on health and mental health, because it is dire and it is in need of support. However, the way the Premier addresses us during question time in this place is, frankly, appalling. He is getting by on arrogance and hubris, and government members are letting him. He has no vision for the state and no compassion in areas like health and mental health, and members opposite are letting him get away with it. He has incompetent ministers, whom members opposite applaud when they get to their feet to try to defend themselves when we say, "Hang on a second, this is not right." I can tell them now that they have other members on their back bench who would do a much better job than at least three of their incompetent ministers right now—a much better job. If they want to stay in government, they need to refresh their team. Right now if they continue to do what we are seeing, all that will happen is that the pendulum will swing back to us quicker than we anticipated. The opposition's own push polling shows it. It shows that 41.2 per cent of Western Australians are unsure whether Mark McGowan should be Premier of Western Australia. That statistic is the same statistic that existed before the Darling Range by-election last year. The government's own push polling tells us that. The Premier is not cutting through any better than he did before the Darling Range by-election. What happened at Darling Range? The government had a 9.3 per cent swing against it and the people sent a very clear message that it is not listening to them, because they were not paying attention to what was hurting mums and dads and all people in Western Australia; that is, the cost of living. That is what is hurting them, and the government is ignoring them with its hubris. There was a 9.3 per cent swing. We have said it in this place before: we need to get to only six per cent and we get our 11 people to be back in government. We do not need the 9.3 per cent; we need only six per cent. That is all we need. Joondalup, Kingsley, Jandakot, Murray–Wellington, Pilbara, Kalamunda, Burns Beach, Bicton, Mount Lawley, Albany and Balcatta are all under six per cent. All of those members should go to their competent, capable backbench members and say, "Step up and help us, because if you don't, we're gone at the next election."

MR S.A. MILLMAN (Mount Lawley) [12.28 pm]: I rise to speak today, enthusiastic about the year ahead and optimistic about the agenda that the McGowan government will pursue in 2019. I have spent the summer doorknocking in the electorate of Mount Lawley and I have learned a great deal about what people in Yokine, Mt Lawley, Dianella, Inglewood, Coolbinia, Menora and Morley have on their minds.

One issue that dominates discussions I have with Western Australians in my community is health and hospitals. People in my community want to see improving services, more facilities and shorter waiting times. So it is a relief to them when I am able to tell them what the McGowan government, particularly the Minister for Health, Roger Cook, is doing to achieve those outcomes. Before the election we said that we would put patients first, and that is what we are doing.

The most vital piece of health infrastructure for the voters of Mount Lawley is Royal Perth Hospital. I am incredibly impressed by the important role that RPH plays in our revitalised inner-city health strategy. Planning is underway for a major redevelopment of Royal Perth Hospital, including provision of a new medihotel. The government's program for urgent care clinics kicked off with the toxicology unit at Royal Perth Hospital. As the Premier outlined in his Premier's Statement, "this year the government will also establish our first dedicated health innovation hub at Royal Perth Hospital."

The electorate of Mount Lawley is also fortunate to benefit from its proximity to Osborne Park Hospital, with nearly 1 400 residents in Yokine, Coolbinia, Menora and Dianella using services at the hospital in 2018. This government's \$50-million expansion and enhancement of the hospital will ensure better access, improved services, higher-quality care and less need for patients to travel to other facilities like Perth Children's Hospital or King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women.

A health system that puts patients first not only requires excellent facilities and infrastructure, but also a refocusing of our attention on mental health. When it comes to mental health, the McGowan government's step-Up, step-down program, ably overseen by Hon Alanna Clohesy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health, provides an avenue for improved access to mental health services and assists people to return to independent living. Locally, increased funding for the Ursula Frayne unit at St John of God Mt Lawley Hospital will considerably improve access to mental health services in our community. As the Premier mentioned in his statement, the mental health observation unit at Royal Perth Hospital is scheduled for completion later this year.

In addition to the public health system, we have a wide array of private medical, allied health and mental health practices across the electorate of Mount Lawley, with dedicated professionals and support staff assisting our community at all stages of life. They are the GPs who Tara and I take our boys to when they are crook, the physios we go to if the Yokine park run takes more out of us than we expected, the dentists, the pharmacists and the optometrists. On behalf of residents in our community, I offer my humble thanks to these dedicated professionals for their contribution to our community.

I would like to mention the work of Dr Amanda Wilkins and her team at FASD CARE. Dr Wilkins is a developmental paediatrician working with children and young people to assess whether they have a disorder on the foetal alcohol spectrum. Seventy per cent of children diagnosed as having such a disorder are in the care of

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a government department. I would like to thank Dr Wilkins for sharing her experiences with me recently. I am keen to take up the issue on her behalf. It is a little-known fact that health and related services is the third-largest employment sector in Western Australia. It is crucial, therefore, that any government puts the wellbeing of this vital sector at the heart of policymaking. I am delighted that the McGowan government is doing precisely that.

Residents in the electorate of Mount Lawley are deeply concerned about their prospects for employment, whether it is a young person looking to enter employment for the first time or an experienced worker concerned for their job security or that of their children. Many Western Australians are looking for work and many are looking for more work. All Western Australians look to this McGowan Labor government hoping that we can create the conditions for increasing employment, and I stand today grateful to be part of a government that is demonstrating its commitment to doing just that. The government's commitment to improving training and better prepare Western Australians for the jobs of the future is commendable. The government's freeze on TAFE fee increases has made a big difference that has encouraged people to gain new skills, and its investment in North Metropolitan TAFE, in the Mount Lawley electorate, will tangibly enhance students' experiences.

I will draw two threads together—health policy and jobs. Through the superb courses offered at North Metropolitan TAFE's Mt Lawley campus students obtain skills to work across the health sector. It is a great example of tertiary education turning school-based STEM education into applicable vocational skills. This relationship between school-based STEM learning, vocational training and innovation that will drive the jobs of the future has no better exemplar in the McGowan government's agenda than the Premier's reference to legislation to establish the future health research and innovation fund. I can think of no better application of the interest earned on the state's future fund than, as the Premier said, "supporting cutting-edge science and jobs" here in WA.

While we are discussing the interconnected ways in which this government is working to create better conditions for employment growth, particularly with regard to education, I give credit to the Direct to Market policy implemented by Minister Sue Ellery. This policy gives schools, particularly P&Cs, a great opportunity to get the best possible value for capital works and gives them the opportunity to utilise local contractors. It is a win for the state government in driving good value and local jobs.

People I have heard from want a government that will stand up for local manufacturing and local businesses. The government's one-stop shop Jobs and Skills Centres and the reintroduction of training in craft industries, like wood machining, vehicle trimming and textile fabrication, are important components of the strategic approach this government is taking under its Plan for Jobs policy. When I talk with people about the McGowan government's Western Australian Jobs Act, the approach it is taking to contracting and the identification of strategic industries that will be the target of job-creating programs, they tell me they are relieved to finally have a government dedicated to supporting local jobs. Whether it is the government's approach to building defence industry capability, locally built rail sets or requiring companies to demonstrate a commitment to locally sourced goods, services and workers, people across my electorate recognise that Premier Mark McGowan and his team are building better conditions for employment growth across the state.

Of course, special mention must go to Treasurer Ben Wyatt for his leadership in ensuring that our state's disciplined financial management makes a strong contribution to improving our economic prospects. Better financial management instils business confidence in our economy, a necessary precursor to jobs growth. The evidence is in: confidence in Western Australia's economy under the McGowan government is growing week by week. I note the reference in the Premier's Statement to the enabling legislation to create Infrastructure WA. This initiative will further enhance this government's reputation for ensuring we get the best value out of the investment we make into major capital works in this state.

Growing jobs is one thing, but protecting workers is something Labor governments, like this one, are uniquely placed to deliver. I am personally committed to using my time in this place to ensure that workers, particularly young workers starting out in the workplace, are not ripped off by unscrupulous employers. I am very pleased that Minister Bill Johnston has convened the wage theft inquiry. I look forward in due course to working with him and my colleagues to come to grips with that inquiry's recommendations. I am dedicated to fighting for stronger occupational health and safety laws. I eagerly await Minister Johnston's efforts to update and enhance the relevant legislation. I will always fight for a workers' compensation regime that helps families to recover from injuries or illnesses that incapacitate working mothers, fathers or children. Workers depend on us; they know they cannot depend on the Liberal Party or the Nationals WA to defend their rights and protect their working conditions. The families of workers know they can depend on us to help ensure they get home safe from work each day.

There is nothing, simply nothing, more exciting to me than visiting any of our wonderful schools in the electorate of Mount Lawley. Doorknocking and meeting people across the electorate has its unique charm. No doubt, it is one of my favourite parts of the job. I feel deeply fortunate to have the opportunity to meet the hard-working P&C committee members, teachers and school administrators whose school environments have been so positively

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affected by the McGowan government's investment in new school infrastructure. There is a special joy in visiting schoolchildren who are excited by getting to grips with slime in their new science labs. My sons are very fortunate to be growing up learning in one of the best educational systems in the world. It is incumbent on all of us to ensure that every Western Australian child has the opportunity to benefit from that system. We know that more education assistants will help us to achieve that. The McGowan government's employment of 300 new EAs over three years, especially in schools with children from disadvantaged backgrounds, will make an immense difference.

We also know that Western Australia's Aboriginal children need extra help if our society is to make more progress in closing the gap. That is why everyone I talk to about the McGowan government's education agenda supports Minister for Education and Training Sue Ellery's instigation of the employment of new Aboriginal and Islander education officers in the schools where they are needed. I take this opportunity to thank the minister for her efforts on behalf Western Australian children most in need of a strong, well-resourced public education system.

These efforts will bear fruit in our own neighbourhood at Yokine Primary School, with its refreshed administration building opening for term 2, and at Mt Lawley Senior High School, with \$4 million of improvements slated for next financial year in the 2018–19 state budget. The flow-on effects of the completion of the Inner City College under construction in Subiaco, alluded to by the member for Perth, will ensure that the immense pressure on schools like Mount Lawley Senior High School is avoided. The McGowan government is demonstrating yet again that the people of Western Australia are right to consider the Labor Party the party of education.

Residents in the electorate of Mount Lawley are vitally interested in increasing usage of public transport, because every day thousands of people travel through the electorate to get to and from the CBD. They travel down Wanneroo Road and Walcott Street, down Flinders Street, Alexander Drive, Walter Road, Beaufort Street and Guildford Road. They come from as far afield as Joondalup, Gingin, Ellenbrook, and from east of Midland, so for us in Mount Lawley, public transport has the potential to make a remarkable impact on our day-to-day lives. We want Metronet because we know that encouraging people out of their cars and onto trains in the outer suburbs means fewer drivers clogging up our local streets. We also appreciate that initiatives like the dedicated bus lane on Beaufort Street deliver better outcomes at a lower cost than can ever be achieved by widening roads in established suburbs solely for cars. Buses, like the immensely popular 950 route down Beaufort Street, and dedicated bus lanes, are an integral part of transforming our city into cleaner, greener communities.

We are also making sensible, careful investments in improving local roads in the inner city, such as the roadworks at the intersection of Morley Drive and Wanneroo Road, and at the intersection of Green Street, Wanneroo Road, Walcott Street and Charles Street. These improvements will facilitate better traffic flows and greater pedestrian safety. These investments are necessary to reduce congestion and increase safety, but also because our most significant inner-city public transport option at the moment is buses—at least until we have a light rail network, and I take this opportunity to say I think that continues to be a good idea.

I was especially pleased to see Minister Rita Saffioti and the Premier launch a new campaign to increase public transport patronage. When we stimulate demand for public transport, when more people jump on buses instead of into a car, we create the need for more frequent services. The public transport system will only improve when we use it, so I urge everyone to get on board at every chance they get. For people across the electorate of Mount Lawley, support for public transport is about more than simply the amenity of our local neighbourhoods. I know that the Minister for Environment, Hon Stephen Dawson, appreciates that we have an abiding interest in making a real contribution to improving the environment we live in, and in which our neighbours live. For us, public transport is just one of the suite of public policies we wish to see adopted to achieve a society that is healthier, happier and more attuned to the land in which we live.

It is high time that Western Australia revised and improved its strategic policy approach to climate change. I know that people in my community will be pleased that the Premier has highlighted in his Premier's Statement the government's intention to do just that. Satellite imagery shows the extent to which the development of our suburbs has denuded the metropolitan area of its trees and undergrowth. These images also show that in some parts of the city there have been recent improvements, as local government authorities work hand in hand with the state government and with residents to plant more trees and undergrowth, particularly in suburbs like Mt Lawley and Yokine. There is still a great deal of work to be done in this regard.

I have mentioned in this place in the past the fantastic work pursued by the great Yokine non-government organisation, Millennium Kids, and its focus on increasing our urban canopy and conserving our established trees. This is just one of the many initiatives the children and young people involved with Millennium Kids are engaged in, and I look forward to hearing about their plans for the year in the near future.

As the Minister for Planning stated so clearly yesterday, this is a government committed to retaining the unique character of our special suburbs, and when it comes to retaining and enhancing suburban character and a sense of community, it is also very pleasing to see communities developing community gardens. Here's hoping that in the

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years ahead our newly established local Inglewood–Mt Lawley Community Garden can take advantage of the great grant program that recently delivered funds to 14 such community gardens across the state.

The much-needed focus on increasing the density of residential development, which is absolutely necessary for conserving the ecosystems of our city's hinterland, must also pay due regard to the necessity of conserving, wherever and to the greatest extent possible, established trees across the city. Contrary to the misguided contribution by the member for Cottesloe, people in Mt Lawley are not, in my experience, simplistically opposed to increased density. They have a nuanced and sophisticated appreciation for planning policy and simply ask that infill projects be properly located.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: I am not taking interjections. Mr Acting Speaker, I would appreciate your assistance. I was polite enough to not interject on the member for Cottesloe, and I am not taking interjections from him.

Contrary to the misguided contribution by the member for Cottesloe, people in Mt Lawley are not, in my experience, simplistically opposed to increased density. They have a nuanced and sophisticated appreciation for planning policy and simply ask that infill projects be properly located, sympathetic to the aesthetic qualities of their surroundings and, wherever possible, preserve established trees. I mention, by way of example, the recent endorsement by Mr Paul Collins of the Mount Lawley Society of Minister for Planning Rita Saffioti's additional conditions on a development in Field Street in Mt Lawley, which imposed precisely that nature of requirement.

It is not always possible. Sometimes schools need new buildings, roads need to be made safer, and private landowners must be entitled to develop their land in a manner consistent with planning schemes.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: But there can and should be a greater emphasis on conservation, and that is why residents in the electorate of Mount Lawley are so supportive of initiatives such as the Better Urban Forest planning policy developed by the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage and the Western Australian Local Government Association.

Another area of particular interest in the electorate of Mount Lawley is the expansion of the bike path network across the city. I am sure that Paul from Bitsa Bikes in Yokine will be rapt to hear me talk about this. Paul has created a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to sharing bikes with disadvantaged cyclists, to get them out and about in their communities. It would be great to see more, better connected and better protected bike paths to keep our children and young people safe as they ride to their mates' houses, to school, and to our beautiful parks. A properly connected network of bike paths—especially an increase in the provision of protected bike paths—will encourage more and more Western Australians onto their bikes. If, as is currently the case, cyclists are frequently battling with cars, either in the gaps between disconnected bike paths, or where a bike path is little more than differently coloured bitumen, there is very little incentive to increase usage.

It is not just about better environmental outcomes, or healthier Western Australians getting more exercise, although it is unquestionably about both of those things. It is a question of improved road safety, for both motorists and cyclists. It is about helping to cut out the aggro, and that has to be good for mental health. Protected bike paths also offer more than this. They can be effective streetscaping tools, providing opportunities for increasing tree planting and calming traffic. Put simply, more and better bike paths save lives, save the environment, and save money for both householders and the state government.

Our McGowan Labor government must stand for stronger families, safer jobs and communities, and a fairer society. Minister Simone McGurk and her department are working with our wonderful community service organisations to transform the lives of 120 families identified as being most in need of support to change the way they live. It is about ensuring the greatest fairness possible for the families who are doing it tough. We are working with community service organisations to get homeless Western Australians into housing. Having already achieved the initial target of getting 50 people into 50 homes, we are working towards a new target. That is how we give a fair go to those most in need in our community. The McGowan government has dedicated itself to a policy of secure, long-term funding for community organisations. This is just part of our recognition of the vitally important role these organisations play in helping our Labor government achieve a fairer society.

Minister McGurk is working diligently to lift the rights and interests of women to a new level in this state. The Women's Voices initiative launched by the minister yesterday will provide all of us with a new appreciation of women's interests in WA and provide a road map for how we can better deliver fairness for Western Australian women from all walks of life.

Having worked as a lawyer for workers injured on the job, I am thoroughly committed to ensuring that our Labor government does all it can to improve the safety of workers and to provide adequately for workers whom, despite

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our best endeavours, our protections have failed. We are working towards refreshing the state's occupational health and safety and workers' compensation laws to bring them up to contemporary standards. That is the fair thing to do for our workers.

This McGowan Labor government takes community safety incredibly seriously. Minister for Police Michelle Roberts and Attorney General John Quigley have already demonstrated the strength of their commitment to ensuring the laws of our state and the enforcement of those laws give Western Australians every confidence that they have a government heavily invested in protecting them from harm. The Premier himself has been directly involved in establishing the Methamphetamine Action Plan Taskforce and providing the resources our frontline services need, including health and mental health services, to respond to the impact of meth use in our community.

I cannot speak highly enough of the job that the Premier and his cabinet are doing for the people of Western Australia. The government's fiscal discipline is winning acclaim locally and internationally. Its dedication to delivering improved services that Western Australians rely on—health, education and policing—is unwavering. We will all benefit from the government's strategic view and its capacity to look to the horizon and see past the fear of threats to the opportunities within our grasp. We are fortunate to have a Labor government so resolute on building the services and infrastructure our communities need, the capacity of our institutions, and the conditions for our economic revival. That is why, I believe, we have reason to face the coming year with hope and optimism.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore) [12.49 pm]: I take this opportunity to join the discussion on the Premier's Statement. Having listened to some of the speeches of Labor Party members, I wonder whether we are talking about the same government and the same set of circumstances. We are hearing all these rosy reports about improving education, health and transport and everything else that is going on in certain inner city areas. Certainly for my constituents in the electorate of Moore, their experience of the Labor government is entirely different. It has now become almost a Christmas tradition for my electorate to expect some sort of bad news to be dropped on it at that time of the year. It must be that cynical planning for the release of bad news that a government does just before it goes away over the break, when everybody is happy, no-one is concentrating too much on the news and no-one wants to talk about politics or turn on the telly. That is when this government seems to unleash its most vindictive policies and decisions upon the people of my electorate.

We have heard discussions in this place over the past couple of years about the effect of the decisions of the Minister for Education and Training in December 2017, when she thought it would be a good idea to attack rural education right across Western Australia with her announcements about funding for the Schools of the Air and a raft of other very important education opportunities, such as the funds collected by the agricultural colleges around our state that are used to provide improved programs and learning opportunities for students. To take 20 per cent out of that funding was a disincentive for the volunteers, staff and students to get good outcomes in those colleges and to reinvest in their own colleges. It was a very miserable and mean-spirited attack. I do not know who sits down and thinks about some of these things that the government comes up with to save a few cents here or there so it can spend more money on Metronet and other projects in the metropolitan area, including the Local Projects, Local Jobs program.

Cuts to education funding affected my electorate quite severely, mainly through the announcement that Moora Residential College would close. That led to a community-based action program that earned publicity right across the world for the government's mean-spirited cuts to education funding in the electorate of Moore and across the region more generally. We even saw the Country Women's Association come to this place. I think I saw a media release from the CWA about a week ago highlighting that it had been a year since it had protested about those disastrous cuts to regional education funding. It had never involved itself in a political discussion before. Although it has advocated strongly for rural women and families for many generations, it had never taken part in an overt political campaign before that point. It was quite extraordinary for it to feel that something was so outrageous and so egregious to rural people that it would get involved in a protest of that nature. That shows how deeply rural people generally, not just the people of Moore, felt those cuts.

As a former principal of an agricultural college, my colleague Hon Terry Redman, the member for Warren-Blackwood, knows very well the importance of rural education. He also highlighted the damaging effect of those cuts on Western Australian camp schools. That led to Fairbridge taking up the program. I have nothing against Fairbridge; it is probably one of the most well regarded institutions in Western Australia. There is real doubt about the educational programs that will be offered in those camp schools and the level of uptake that will be available for schools, especially those schools that have a bit more of a challenge financially and geographically to get to these facilities. It is very important for those kids to get away and see something of the world. That was another example of the mean-spirited cuts that we have come to expect from this government. I would have thought the government

Extract from Hansard

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Dr Tony Buti; Mr John Carey; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Shane Love

had learnt the lesson from 2017 that rural people will not take these things quietly, even though it tries to sneak these things through over Christmas.

As the member for Geraldton will be aware, as will everybody in this house, in the latter part of 2018, another disastrous program was foisted upon mainly regional WA—it did not affect just regional people; some within the metropolitan area were also affected by this—and that was the attempted nationalisation of a portion of the lobster fishing industry. I note that the Minister for Mines and Petroleum is in the chamber, so he would correct me if I said “crayfish”. The lobster industry was one of the most successful and well-managed fisheries in the world to the point that I believe it had been given a tick of approval for stewardship three times. It was a sustainable industry that was well managed and well regulated by a government that was disinterested in gaining particular profit from the industry and took only a percentage of the catch to enable it to manage the industry well. It had no particular incentive to get involved in decisions about the total catch that might be taken from that industry. All of that changed in November last year when a rather peculiar press release was put out by the Minister for Fisheries. It was so cryptic that no-one understood what it was about. People rang me and asked what was going on, what it meant and what the changes were that would affect the industry. I believe that a meeting was held with the Western Rock Lobster Council during November to try to provide some information, but it went away just as mystified as everybody else about what was being proposed. What did the government mean by “a greater return” for the community? Over the unfolding weeks and months, we came to know that what was proposed was nothing more than the attempted takeover of a good portion of that industry by the government for its own financial benefit. Overturning that longstanding industry practice of having a disinterested regulator that made very good decisions based on science and what was best for the fishery, the government that oversees that department is going to actively profit from an expansion of the take that is allowed in the industry.

All this is happening at a time when there are high counts of puerulus, or baby lobsters, and that would support perhaps a modest increase over time in the take that would be available. That has to be offset because of some of the changes in the marine landscape. People forget that the marine area is a bit like the land; it is a natural resource and it is affected by climate. In 2011, along the coast from Shark Bay to at least Jurien Bay, a vast area of sea was affected by a marine heat wave. That heat wave decimated thousands and thousands of hectares of seagrass meadow. We have no idea what that will mean for the survival of the puerulus. Indeed, I spoke not that long ago to a researcher who was doing a PhD on what has now developed as a dead zone off Leeman, smack bang in the middle of what used to be one of the most thriving nurseries for crayfish on the west coast. There is virtually an absence of crayfish—or lobster. Why is that happening? Why would a department that has traditionally relied upon the simple measure of the puerulus count not compute in its figures what effects that might have on the survival of crayfish, on subsequent catches and on subsequent reasonable allocations?

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 411.]

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm