

APPROPRIATION (RECURRENT 2018–19) BILL 2018
APPROPRIATION (CAPITAL 2018–19) BILL 2018

Second Reading — Cognate Debate

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Nationals WA) [2.57 pm]: I rise to add to the debate on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2018–19) Bill 2018 and the Appropriation (Capital 2018–19) Bill 2018. It is incredibly disappointing, and with a heavy heart, that as the leader of a party that represents the good people —

The SPEAKER: Members! Everyone likes to have their budget response heard in silence, and the Leader of the National Party is no different. If you want to have a meeting, go outside.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is with a heavy heart, as the leader of a party that represents the good people of regional Western Australia, that we come to this place to talk about the second budget of the McGowan Labor government. In this budget, we see no commitment to real and meaningful regional development, and no commitment to royalties for regions. Despite what the Premier and the Treasurer continue to say about royalties for regions, there is no commitment to the communities that generate the wealth of this state. It is unfortunate that for the Labor Party, regional Western Australia is a political pawn. The people of regional Western Australia are either showered with funding or ignored completely. The government's lack of commitment to a regional development plan and to a fund that was designed to assist those communities to grow and thrive will have long-term ramifications for this state.

This is the second budget brought down by this government and we are starting to see the thin veneer of the Labor Party's regional credentials. Although the Treasurer is happy to accept the analysis from the broader community and the media that this budget is workmanlike, beige and boring, for regional Western Australians it is anything but. It is further proof to us that Labor had no financial plan when it came to government. It is further proof that the plan that the Nationals WA took to the last state election had merit. It is further proof that the government has no intention to reduce state debt in any meaningful way because it knows that it cannot. That is a great disappointment for the people of regional Western Australia; they are being used to prop up department expenditure for the Labor Party's—at this point unfunded—pet projects so that the Treasurer can seemingly take the kudos from those commentators and journalists that the budget is beige and workmanlike. When we peel it back, we can see that for regional Western Australians it is anything but.

The government cannot possibly achieve the debt reduction that it aspires to and a return to surplus with the levers it has available to it. It is built on a smoke-and-mirrors approach to budgeting. The more we peel it back, as I said earlier in the week, the more pain and difficulty people, particularly those from regional Western Australia, will have in understanding why this government has made the choices that it has made. Paying off that debt slowly and carefully like a mortgage, which is what our Treasurer continues to say he will do, sounds responsible and reasonable. However, the reality is that the government has to claw back funding from a raft of programs and initiatives that have been rolled out. A lot of them are what we would consider essential services in our regional communities. It has to do nothing more than meet those election commitments and deliver on projects such as Metronet. There are some fairly big holes in the ongoing costings and matching funding that is needed to meet those commonwealth commitments.

Regional Western Australians know now that this government was elected on a lie. It was elected on promises of creating jobs, keeping royalties for regions and maintaining services and making sure that ordinary householders were not impacted. It has done everything but. It has done exactly the opposite. We all know what happens when we lie. Eventually, the truth is revealed. It is revealed in increased household budgets; every household is feeling the pain. When we talk to businesses across the state, we find out that people are holding on to their cash because they are nervous. They do not know how much more this government over the next three years will shift the burden of managing the state's books to their households. It is revealed in the cuts to royalties for regions. We are going to call them cuts because that is exactly what they are. Royalties for regions is in this budget in nothing but name. It always has been more than just a name. Royalties for regions was a fund that was created to drive a regional development agenda to make sure that the people who live in regional Western Australia, with their aspirations, their communities, their businesses, and their children, all have the opportunity to benefit from spending by the state government in areas in which there are not a lot of people. We saw it in question time again. This Premier continually talks about the fact that when we put money in areas in which there are not many people—for example, in the context of Moora Residential College—there is no bang for buck. There is no bang for buck when we spend in areas where there are not many people, so why would we do it? That is the attitude that the Labor Party brings to its budget and regional development. I guarantee that any future government that the Nationals is a part of will include a program called royalties for regions. It will not be the Labor version we see today. It will not be royalties for regions lite. It will not be the Diet Coke version of a program we created, fought for, delivered and worked on

with our partners in government when we were in government. This royalties for regions that we see today is there in name only in these budget papers.

It is amusing to me that members opposite quite often talk about it being no more than a slogan when we were in government and an electioneering tool for the Nationals. I can promise, absolutely, that nothing could be further from the truth. It shows the ignorance of members opposite when they go down that path. It shows that they are ignorant of the passion of the community when we came to government in 2008. Communities rallied behind the message that was given and the hope that was provided that there was a policy that would ensure that government decision-makers had to consider regional communities. It is wilful ignorance or just plain ignorance that many of the members opposite, who are happy to become an echo chamber of the Premier and ministers on royalties for regions, do not go back and look at the attitudes of regional Western Australians when we came to government in 2008. The reason that there was enormous support for royalties for regions was that regional Western Australians had felt completely neglected and left out. I know from talking to former Premier Carpenter that he pointed to things and said, "We spent money in regional areas." However, it is the way that a Labor government approaches regional development that leaves regional Western Australians cold. We are lucky if we get some funding. We saw that in comments from the Premier on Tuesday; it was almost like regional Western Australians should feel grateful that the government is still delivering power and water services and essential health and education funding. That is certainly how it was received in some of my communities. There was indignation because of course we deserve to have power, water, health and education. We contribute to this state's economy and pay taxes. Royalties for regions was about more than that. If this Labor government continues down the normal playbook of picking and choosing and creating pet projects and centralising its regional development agenda into Perth, as it has done, we will find that regional Western Australians will respond in the same way as they did back in 2008. They were angry, disillusioned and forgotten. It was not as though there was no funding.

The one that gets me is Moora Hospital. Labor continued pointing to the fact that it funded Moora Hospital. Labor capitulated to a campaign run by that community to have that hospital funded. It was not because it was planning on spending the money. It had other plans. The Moora community had to fight and scrap for that investment. For the Premier and others to come in here and say, "Look at this. That is what we did", forgets the history of that issue, which was that that community had to fight for another essential service, and we find ourselves back there again with Moora Residential College. This community is fighting and scrapping to try to retain an essential piece of infrastructure that is vital for our communities in regional WA.

We have talked about this enormous cost shift from consolidated revenue into royalties for regions. Members in the chamber on Tuesday would have seen the graph that we created that visually represented what was happening over the forward estimates with royalties and how much of that consolidated revenue programming is being pushed into royalties for regions. Over \$1.5 billion of normal government expenditure has been transferred into this \$4 billion program. That is why, when this government says it has a commitment to regional development, nobody believes them. People can see it with their own eyes in the budget papers. It is there in black and white. If that is allowed to continue, it will only further diminish the value that that program can deliver. There will be less and less program funding in that \$4 billion initiative to really drive those projects that can grow our communities. The arrogance of this government has been astounding as it seeks to justify those decisions. It points to water, power and hospitals and schools. Yes, that is the Premier's job; that is what he is supposed to do. I hope it is not the Premier's expectation that our communities are supposed to be grateful. As I have said before, we do not get gold stars for doing our job and meeting expectations. The arrogance of this government is appalling and we see it more and more. This budget is starting to form a pattern and we will be able to prove, without doubt, that the government is diminishing royalties for regions and walking away from any kind of structured regional development. The purpose of the royalties for regions fund is being subverted and rationalised by a government that has no real commitment to regional development.

From my perspective, the best way to talk about this lack of commitment to regional development is to look at the Pilbara and why the approach of Labor to regional development is no good. The government constantly harps back to the set of books that the Liberal–National government inherited in 2008, pointing to the surplus and the level of debt, saying, "Look at what we left you; weren't we great?" The reason that there was a surplus and no significant debt was that it spent nothing. It spent nothing and regional Western Australia is the perfect example of that. Housing for our essential workers—police, nurses and teachers—was crumbling. It was appalling. We had doctor shortages right across my electorate where we would hold town hall meetings with people who were so concerned and angry that it was not even on the radar for the government. Hospitals and community infrastructure were crumbling. Local government reports stated that they had no capacity to fill in the shortfall for infrastructure funding because they were not receiving appropriate support. The former Labor government had a projected surplus of \$1.8 billion and a net debt of \$7.9 billion because it was not spending anything; and if it was, it was not spending it in regional Western Australia. The Pilbara delivers such an enormous amount of the state's and nation's gross domestic product but anyone who visited or lived there in 2006, running into the early years of 2008, would

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tell you that those communities in the Pilbara were dormitories and shanty towns that were under enormous pressure. They could see what was coming, yet they could get no traction in investment. Chris Adams, the City of Karratha chief executive officer, said it very plainly at a forum that I attended a couple of weeks ago when he said that they were caught with their pants down. The former Labor government did no work on the land assembly that was required to make sure that house prices did not rocket. No work was done on public infrastructure, water or power for an expanding population and no work was done to enhance the community facilities that allowed small businesses to stay in town and attract the workers they so sorely needed. That was absolutely the problem that we faced in the very short term upon coming to government.

With the advent of royalties for regions when we formed government, we created a comprehensive regional development program and set about righting those wrongs. Pilbara Cities was a big part of that and was built on four key pillars—housing and land, community infrastructure, and normal government infrastructure, so power and water, and economic diversification. At the forum, Chris Adams said that we have done incredibly well on the first three and we are working on the fourth. He said that the investment through the Pilbara Cities program, which allowed us to address all those things, meant that the communities in the Pilbara are now prepared for whatever growth comes their way and they can actively pursue economic diversification opportunities because they now have the land, the community infrastructure and a somewhat diversified economy with small businesses that are able to attract and retain employees. That was part of that program. Yes, there was funding through royalties for regions, but we enabled a plan to be put in place through work with the development commission and the regional development department as part of a comprehensive plan. All of that, as far as I can see in terms of planning for the regions, has now been centralised back to the Perth Department of Regional Development. Our development commissions have been undermined and all their employees, I understand, are now employees of the Department of Regional Development. I am not sure what advice the minister is taking from the boards and the people who worked so hard to invest and build their communities, but there is disillusionment in those communities that once knew where to go. They knew they could go to the development commission and they knew their pathway to government. If they had a plan or wanted to talk to someone about an aspirational opportunity, they knew that they could sit down and have a pathway to government to talk about how they could do things better for their community. For all intents and purposes, that is being slowly dismantled and the confusion behind the scenes is extraordinary.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms M.J. DAVIES: That coupled with the fund being demolished, essentially with all that consolidated revenue pushed into it, means that there is no plan for regional development. That is when I say that if the Nationals are part of a future government, we will always have royalties for regions as a part of our platform, but it will not be the version put forward by the Labor Party in this government, which is not royalties for regions. That is why we are very confident when we say that royalties for regions under a Labor government is for all intents and purposes dead—it is gone.

I will very quickly in the last few minutes talk about issues from my electorate's perspective and some sector issues around agriculture, which are important to me. I want to talk about the things in this budget that are going to impact not only the electorate of Central Wheatbelt but certainly right across the state. From my perspective, there are a few kickers in there that have been confirmed in the bringing down of the budget. First and foremost, I thank the Minister for Education and Training, the Premier and others for reversing their decision on Northam Residential College. As the member for Central Wheatbelt, it is a vital part of our community and certainly something we see as an opportunity to further develop. I urge them to do the same thing for Moora Residential College. The community that is running that campaign has our support for as long they need it because these issues cut right to the core of what regional communities see as the most important thing, which is to provide educational opportunities for their kids.

The cuts to community resource centres are also particularly heartless. Twenty-five of the 103 community resource centres are in my electorate. They are at the centre of communities, some of which have no more than a population of 250 people in the whole shire, and offer support to seniors by allowing people to access government services and providing a computer or a printer to those members of the community who do not have access to the most basic of information technology. That is just the very, very basic of what they offer. They work with community groups to assist in leveraging government and non-government funding to deliver projects and services in their community. They run training and provide opportunities for employment. The traineeship program, I understand, is at risk as a result of the cuts. The trainees who have gone through that program have gone on to be employed in other areas of the community. The centres have assisted mums who have come back to the workforce to gain confidence and do a formal type of training. Some of the older members of the community have been able to utilise that pathway as well. For the government to simply say that the CRCs will be able to cope and should just open their doors for three days a week is to completely discount the value of those services and what

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they offer to our communities. They are hurting. As I said, there are 25 of them in my electorate. There are 25 boards in my electorate that meet and are happy to contribute their time on a voluntary basis. It was very distressing to hear a comment—I am not sure which minister it was attributed to, but it was in the media—that suggested that our volunteers need to step up and fill in the gaps. I tell members what; they are at capacity in regional Western Australia, particularly in the wheatbelt. They already wear multiple hats in the community groups to keep our communities thriving. They do not complain about that, but for a government member to suggest that they need to step up and fill in the gaps because the government is taking funding from community resource centres —

Ms S.F. McGurk: Who said it? You don't know.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I actually said that I do not know. I acknowledge that. But it was on the radio and it was one of the ministers. I can correct the record if I can find it, but it was certainly attributed to a minister. It was very disappointing. It was in the context of some reports that has been released about volunteering. There were discussions yesterday on ABC Great Southern radio and there had been comments previously.

My fear is that if we expect our volunteers to step into the breach left by these community resource centres not being open, they will not have the capacity to do it. They are happy to be part of delivering better services—emergency services and community sporting groups—to make all those things work because that is what we do. But those CRCs are vital and they offer some amazing opportunities for us to link into specialist organisations to create business opportunities. Across my electorate tonight, several meetings will be held at which business networks will be connected up to talk about the things they can do better in engaging with government and also drawing new opportunities into their community. That is the technology part of it, but the people who work in those offices provide things such as tourism advice. I was in the Bruce Rock CRC last week. We had tourists in there and a lady had come in to use the computers to access Medicare information. As we transfer more of our government services onto a digital platform and as more of our ageing population will be required to access that information and engage with government successfully, we need to make sure that they are not being disenfranchised. That is exactly what is going to happen. If they are using their mobile phone, these people are relying on a good mobile signal in the first case. The CRCs are very close to our hearts in regional Western Australia. It is unfortunate that we have already seen a couple of incorrect classifications. The Minister for Regional Development has since corrected them. They were both CRCs in my electorate—Wandering and Boddington. I wonder whether, in the haste to claw back that funding, other mistakes have been made and further angst created for these networks that are trying to respond to minimised funding. The CRCs and the residential college that we have talked about at length in this place are two things that I feel very strongly about. In my electorate, we have outstanding residential colleges in Northam and Merredin. We feel for the community of Moora and the people who rely on that residential college because we know what our college means to us.

I will touch briefly on agriculture being the key driver of the economy from a central wheatbelt perspective; it underpins my electorate's economy. We have been getting more feedback from across the state about the Minister for Agriculture and Food and how her priorities in driving an agenda for agriculture are worrying people in regional Western Australia. She seems to be tinkering with some fringe ideas and ignoring conventional agriculture at the behest of devoting resources to some more unusual ideas. Today and previously we have talked about her attitude towards live export. It is incredibly disappointing because we need to have someone sitting around the cabinet table who supports, promotes and advocates agriculture, but this minister seems absolutely hell-bent on undermining that part of the sector. I welcome David Littleproud's comments today in response to the McCarthy review. The review has been done on the basis of science. The fellow who delivered the report is a veterinarian who has been in the industry for a long time and has taken a scientific approach to it. David Littleproud, the federal Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, has been very clear about the fact that we need to make sure that if there is fault to be found, the directors of these companies need to be punished. There has been discussion around making sure that the stocking rates on these ships are reduced, particularly in the summer months. Ongoing work is being done on the regulatory framework and the role of the regulator, so further reviews are to be tabled. Today, on balance, the response of Minister Littleproud has been good and it has certainly provided some comfort to an industry in Western Australia in particular that was feeling very uncertain. It then woke up to the Minister for Agriculture and Food in Western Australia saying that she will continue to undermine that sector and create uncertainty.

Mr D.R. Michael interjected.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: That is what she is doing, member. If she says that she does not support a summer trade and will use every avenue available to her to shut it down and put restrictions on the trade, she is creating uncertainty and she is causing —

Mr D.R. Michael: Is there a level of cruelty or an amount of cruelty that will change your views?

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Ms M.J. DAVIES: I have four minutes left. My position and that of the Nationals on live animal export is very clear.

Mr D.R. Michael: Will you export no matter what?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Do not verbal me, member! Do not verbal me on this because I will tell him —

Mr D.R. Michael interjected.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I will give the member the best example —

The ACTING SPEAKER: Excuse me, member. I am sorry, but the member has only three minutes left, so we will let her finish.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I will read out the best quote that I have read about this. It comes from a young producer in Western Australia and her name is Bindi Murray. Her quote outlines exactly how I feel about this and states —

“Looking after animals is about managing a variety of different environments and situations and the trade moving to a model that supports a welfare-based system is in line with how ... producers, care for our animals.”

That is exactly what the producers in Western Australia want to see—absolutely! These producers will welcome the fact that we are shifting along the supply chain to the animal welfare system that our farmers and producers use every day. I welcome the report today, and there will be more from the federal agriculture minister, but this is an important sector and the Nationals absolutely support it going forward with animal welfare being maintained at that central point.

Just quickly in the last two minutes I have left, I was incredibly disappointed to see no ongoing funding in the budget for the Regional Men’s Health Initiative. At the moment, we are potentially facing another dry season in the wheatbelt. I am hopeful that we will get a break and the farmers who are getting towards the end of their seeding program will get the relief that they need. The Regional Men’s Health Initiative has saved people’s lives. I truly hope that the funding is not there because the contract has come to an end and an extension is being negotiated, not because the government does not intend to continue the initiative. Owen Catto and his team who started that program in the wheatbelt and now run it statewide provide an incredibly vital service for our regional families—not just for the men, but also for the women and the families who support the men. I personally know people who have been saved through this initiative. They have been on the brink of saying, “It’s all too much.” It is almost worse for these men when it is not a poor season. During a poor season, everyone is lumped in together and everyone feels the stress together. But it is those times outside that when a person might be struggling from a business or a family perspective and they need that ongoing support. I urge the minister, the Premier and the Treasurer to find the money to make sure that initiative can continue over the forward estimates because it is incredibly important and we are talking about people’s lives. It is not one of those things that can be pulled back. It is an essential service and it does far more than any government department could do on a shoestring budget to deliver an amazing amount of health education and support for those men and families who are under pressure in our regional areas. From a regional development perspective, we hold grave concerns for a strong agenda for regional development from this government. It seems to have completely disappeared.

MS E. HAMILTON (Joondalup) [3.28 pm]: I, too, would like to make a contribution to the debate on the McGowan Labor government’s second budget: the Appropriation (Recurrent 2018–19) Bill 2018 and the Appropriation (Capital 2018–19) Bill 2018.

I stand here in state Parliament as a proud advocate for a vibrant and growing electorate. There is a lot going on in Joondalup and, with each passing day, I am reminded how lucky I am to represent this busy part of our state. From supporting a thriving business district to growing a learning precinct and an impressive health centre, Joondalup is a place that many Western Australian families call home. These families—each and every one of them—run a budget. They pay their bills on time, they spend their money responsibly and they do not leave huge debt to their kids. They are entitled to expect their government to do the same. Prior to last year’s election, this was not the case. Western Australians had a government that mishandled the budget and poorly managed our state’s finances. The 2017 election marked a profound change in our state’s direction. By electing a McGowan government, Western Australians elected a government committed to fiscal responsibility, and under the direction of the McGowan government, our state is on track to return to surplus in 2020–21. But fiscal responsibility and delivering a surplus does not mean ignoring the needs of our state. It does not mean that the government should fail to provide the services that Western Australians desperately need. That is why the McGowan Labor government is investing in Western Australia. We are investing in infrastructure and delivering services fundamental to our great state’s continued success.

Health care is central to the 2018–19 budget and central to the concerns of my constituents in Joondalup. I want to talk primarily about what this budget does for our state’s health system. Members of the McGowan government know

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that without its health, our state does not have anything. Although the times may require responsible spending and this budget does precisely that, it does not sacrifice our government's commitment to putting patients first.

[Quorum formed.]

Ms E. HAMILTON: The McGowan government's approach to health is focused and the aim is clear—to build a sustainable, world-class health system and deliver the best health care for all Western Australians, regardless of where they live. That is no simple task. Delivering widescale health care of a high quality is made all the more difficult by our state's significant size, but the McGowan government has the courage and commitment to meet the task. That is why this budget includes a \$37 billion total investment in health, with \$655 million invested in infrastructure over the next four years. The investments are wide and they are needed. We will see WA's first urgent care clinic at Royal Perth Hospital. We will also see WA's first medihotel as part of the large, 9.6-hectare Murdoch health and knowledge precinct located alongside Fiona Stanley Hospital. The precinct will include aged-care beds, housing and health and research facilities. These investments are about ensuring our state's health care provides for our state's needs. It is also about ensuring that the McGowan Labor government progresses its election commitments. It is what the people of Western Australia expect of this government. It is what they voted for and it is what they deserve.

The health commitments within this budget relate not only to treatment. They also deal, as is absolutely necessary, with prevention of health issues and the promotion of quality health for Western Australians. They drive innovation, integration and cultural change. It is not just about us; it is also about future generations and ensuring their health is our concern. The healthcare commitments in this budget signal to all Western Australians that their health is our state's health.

This government continues to make funding for mental health, alcohol and other drug issues a priority to help the wellbeing of Western Australians. Dealing with drug use in the community is, regardless of whether we like it or not, one of the great challenges of this century. I have spoken before in this house on this issue. The government does not shy away from the challenge; this government is prepared to keep up the fight. Families struggling with these issues need help and support, as do those individuals who are enthralled in addiction. This budget says the help is there and, more importantly, it will continue to be there. While we search for solutions, we must continue to offer support.

Importantly, this budget puts Western Australian's health care on a more sustainable footing. In handling our state's finances, which are funded by hardworking Western Australians, our government has a duty to make effective use of these funds so every health dollar spent represents value for money. Every health dollar delivers quality care for Western Australians. But the dollars matter; the greater the funding available, the greater the services we can deliver for Western Australians who need them.

The 2017 election did many things, including sending a very clear message to the federal government. The federal government has been informed that Western Australia deserves its fair share of the GST, but it is not taking action. In the McGowan government, Western Australians elected a state government that is committed to fighting for Western Australia's interests. The \$189 million in health infrastructure funding committed by the federal government is proof of this. It is proof that WA has a strong government that understands the needs of its people and will fight for its fair share. The effort has not ended; we will continue to lobby the federal government to ensure contributions like the \$189 million are given as necessary, not as ad hoc, payments, and ensure that the federal government gives us our fair share of GST.

Joondalup Health Campus is of considerable importance to the people of my electorate, and I would like to take the opportunity to highlight just how critical this budget is to the people of Joondalup and their health services. The story of Joondalup Health Campus is, in many respects, the story of the northern suburbs. Joondalup Health Campus has been in operation since June 1996. In 20 years, it has more than doubled its public patient bed capacity from 235 to 514 beds. The Joondalup area has seen one of our state's biggest growth spurts, with this growth showing no signs of stopping. Between 2013 and 2026, the north metropolitan population will increase by 29 per cent to just over 1.3 million people. This increased population will require increased healthcare services, with the demand focusing on Joondalup Health Campus. As the northern suburbs continue to grow, Joondalup Health Campus must also. By 2020–21, hospital demand will outstrip its capacity to deliver health services in the northern metropolitan corridor of WA. Urgent action is necessary if the healthcare needs of the northern suburbs are to be met by Joondalup Health Campus. The McGowan Labor government is delivering this. The budget provides a considerable \$158 million contribution to the expansion of Joondalup Health Campus. The big challenge our state faces has to be met with decisive action. Significant population growth, localised in areas like the northern suburbs, requires thoughtful government solutions. Western Australians need a government that builds the health infrastructure that meets their needs and we will be doing that at Joondalup Health Campus.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 17 May 2018]

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Activity at Joondalup Health Campus has increased significantly in recent years. Although the hospital continues to perform extremely well, the expansion will provide for health services in the northern suburbs unencumbered by a looming expiry date. It will ensure that the health campus grows with the community it services. In 2016 alone, the emergency department had close to 100 000 presentations, making it one of the busiest emergency departments in Australia. The hospital has held this position for some years now. It is vital that a place so many Westerns Australians attend in need of care and support is well equipped to meet those demands.

The \$158 million is, importantly, a responsible spend. Northern suburbs residents can take comfort in the knowledge that their state's resources are being effectively managed and carefully spent. The expansion will include 90 additional public inpatient beds; an expansion of the number of mental health beds from a commitment of 30 to a standalone 75-bed mental health unit, with the support of federal funding; and the establishment of an urgent care clinic near Joondalup Health Campus to treat patients who are assessed as non-urgent and help reduce pressure on the emergency department. A medihotel will also be built to free up more hospital beds and improve patient flows. The expansion will also include eight new operating theatres, the establishment of a six-bed stroke unit and expanded emergency department capacity, along with increased parking for visitors and staff.

I am really very happy about the funding that has been allocated in this budget for the opening of a six-bed stroke unit. I have raised the matter in this house and know that there is a need in the community for this unit. It has been spoken about for many years. In this financial year, work will commence on an acute, comprehensive stroke service. Funding of \$5 million in 2017–18 budget has been allocated through a service agreement with the North Metropolitan Health Service and the operator, Joondalup Health Campus, for additional inpatient activity and non-admitted clinical activity in the new stroke unit. Work on the stroke unit will commence before the expansion, with the opening expected to occur in the second half of this year, which is not far away at all.

A stroke working party was established at the end of 2017. Like most significant achievements, the stroke unit has been achieved through a team effort. I want to say thank you and congratulations to all involved. With support from the state government, the Department of Health, the National Stroke Foundation and the local community, the North Metropolitan Health Services and Joondalup Health Campus have worked together on the establishment of a local stroke unit. As our state grows older, it does not mean that we have to grow more vulnerable. Services like the stroke unit are fundamental to ensuring that our state provides its residents with a modern health service. I must take a moment to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Sally Allen, who heads up the stroke support group and has done so for many years. The upgrade and expansion of Joondalup Health Campus was a key election commitment by WA Labor to provide Western Australians with health care that both caters for their needs and makes effective use of their state's resources, and that is what we are delivering.

Moving on, I would like to spend some time talking about the great announcement that was made in Joondalup on Tuesday—Connect Joondalup. Where we live is an important part of this budget. On Tuesday, the McGowan government announced Connect Joondalup. It is part of WA's biggest ever collection of infill opportunities. Just as our healthcare system has to grow in order to provide for our population, so too must our state's housing. We know that families and young people are desperate to enter the housing market but are worried that the opportunities may not be there. Others are looking to downsize but want to be able to age in place. Issues like these require innovative government thinking to deliver solutions that cater to the wide variety of needs in our community.

Over a long period, WA has nurtured some wonderful communities and places where Western Australians live and enjoy life, just like Joondalup. As mentioned already, we are home to one of our state's largest shopping centres, Lakeside Joondalup Shopping City, which is a sprawling location offering a range of shops and services. Edith Cowan University is a thriving learning precinct, leading innovation in many areas. North Metropolitan TAFE in Joondalup supports students as they learn vital professional skills. The Western Australia Police Academy is training recruits to join the WA Police Force. These are all located very close geographically and in close proximity to Joondalup train station, a transit station that integrates local residents' travel with their lives.

The issue of housing choices and affordability is a critical one for the state and it is one that the McGowan Labor government is addressing. Connect Joondalup will continue the transformation around the Joondalup city centre, creating a community hub that is linked to Metronet. It will be located on 10.1 hectares situated between Joondalup Drive, McLarty Avenue, Shenton Avenue and the northern edge of Grand Boulevard. It is located directly opposite HBF Arena. It will see about 1 600 new dwellings built, with construction expected to inject significant funds into the state's economy and create and support thousands of local jobs. The state government is currently seeking expressions of interest from private developers to achieve Connect Joondalup's vision.

A project of this magnitude needs support. I am pleased that the City of Joondalup has indicated its strong support of the McGowan Labor government's plan for Connect Joondalup. On the front page of today's *Joondalup Weekender* newspaper, the mayor said that he was excited about the prospect of seeing development

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and growth in the Joondalup city centre. I am pleased to hear this. I have spoken on this issue in this house before. Our local communities in parts of the northern suburbs are currently not satisfied with the plans in place to increase housing density. The city has shown a lack of leadership on this issue. People should rightfully expect that their local representatives do their job effectively and act in a way that ensures that they are successfully engaging and communicating with their local community. I have been advocating strongly within our government to increase density in the Joondalup CBD as the first place we should look to start to address increasing density. Connect Joondalup is a high-quality development in a strategic location that will benefit our community. It will create connected communities, with the government leveraging links between land use and transport planning.

This development sits outside of current housing opportunity areas. This development and the resulting density should now inform the conversations currently happening around housing opportunity areas at the City of Joondalup. This is a game changer when it comes to the infill requirements for Joondalup and should be considered in the overall picture. Local residents understand the importance of increasing density but agree that it needs to be done in a well thought out way and in consultation with the community. The mayor needs to act as a leader and work with the state government on this so that we can see a positive outcome for all residents of the City of Joondalup. I look forward to seeing meaningful engagement to achieve a positive outcome.

Moving on slightly, I would like to touch briefly on the new TAFE jobs and skills centres included in the budget. Progress is a fundamental part of this government's plan for the state. Inseparable from progress is jobs. A key part of the government's jobs plan is the creation of new jobs and skills centres at TAFE campuses. These centres are a vital part of WA Labor's plan for jobs. The jobs and skills centres are state government services offering free career, training and employment assistance. It is important that our state's education services are professionally minded and that they prepare students for the workplace. These centres are a one-stop shop for anyone looking to improve their skills and job prospects. It is a service for students, jobseekers and career changers. It fulfils an election commitment to transform Western Australia's TAFE colleges into industry skill centres. North Metropolitan TAFE in Joondalup is the proud location of one of these centres. The campus is well placed to engage with the local community and industry so they can respond effectively to the needs of their clients. I know that this will be very well received in my electorate. Each centre will have dedicated staff providing practical implementation of our government's plan for jobs. More is expected of jobseekers than perhaps ever before. Skills are needed to ensure that those entering the job market are able to contribute to industry from the outset. Jobs and skills centres are important ways in which our government will achieve this, to ensure that our state's business and industry operate in the manner that is needed.

I could talk for a while about the benefits of this budget and what it means for the people of Joondalup. The Premier was in Ocean Reef recently to announce that \$5 million will be allocated to a state-of-the-art performing arts centre at Ocean Reef Senior High School. We listened to a performance from the band called Peace of Mind when the Premier and my colleague the member for Burns Beach visited the school recently. It was quite a treat. Students who are participating in the contemporary music program at Ocean Reef will really benefit from the additional infrastructure that this performing arts centre will provide. After speaking with the principal, I am aware that it will be a great place for additional performance spaces in the northern suburbs.

I will touch on one other local primary school. Beaumaris Primary School will receive \$200 000 to fund a perimeter fence. The school P&C was in contact with the government quite a lot during the election campaign as the school has experienced significant vandalism, antisocial behaviour and damage to school buildings and surrounds. This funding has been very well received.

This government has a plan for our state, and this budget helps to ensure that we achieve it. It meets the fundamental expectations of Western Australians. It delivers on health, enriches our community and integrates education with jobs. Our state's budgets must be about ensuring that Western Australians' money is spent for the good of Western Australians. The McGowan government's plan for Western Australia is now well and truly underway. The hard yards are being put in now. Developing and implementing important budgetary decisions are part of ensuring that WA is well placed for future success. I commend the budget to the house.

MR M.J. FOLKARD (Burns Beach) [3.47 pm]: I rise to speak to the Appropriation (Recurrent 2018–19) Bill 2018 and the Appropriation (Capital 2018–19) Bill 2018. Before I do, I would like to say that my thoughts and best wishes are with the extended family of the people who lost their lives recently and the community of Margaret River, and our finest first responders, the police, who attended the tragic incident down in the south west. My thoughts are with them.

I would first like to offer my congratulations to the Treasurer, the honourable member for Victoria Park, for the delivery of his second budget. Our government inherited the worst set of books since the Great Depression as a result of the reckless spending of the previous Premier and the member for Riverton in his role as Treasurer. We should remember that this recklessness was carefully evidenced and laid out in our Langoulan inquiry. That is

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a fact. Despite this, the Treasurer has managed to rein in spending growth from a decade-long average of 6.4 per cent and reduce it to a sustainable 0.9 per cent. This is a thoroughly commendable act, as the Treasurer has managed to both rein in spending and have a clear plan for job creation and infrastructure growth in Western Australia for my electorate of Burns Beach.

In the last budget, \$24 million was allocated to Burns Beach. Of that \$24 million, \$20 million is going to education. This includes the development of the much-needed Burns Beach primary school, on which we can expect to see work commence in 2021. As many present would be aware, I am passionate about education. I left school without knowing how to read and write. As a result, I had to teach myself to read and put myself through night school to complete my education. No child today should have to do that. Anything that I can do to ensure that the students of my community have a competitive and quality education will remain my and this government's top priority. Nowadays the demands on future employees has meant that today's students need to become competent in more than just literacy and numeracy; they must be digitally literate as well, broadly educated in the subjects of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. This is a huge demand that the modern environment places on our students. If this demand was applied to me all those years ago, I may not have got as far as I did, but it is necessary in order to compete in an increasingly digitalised world. Fortunately, our government understands this challenge, and will do what it can to support Western Australian students in realising their potential. This financial year, Clarkson, Mindarie and Joondalup Primary Schools will receive funding to install dedicated science labs. This funding will help introduce science lessons to our students at a younger age, and better prepare them for science in secondary school. It also enables our educators to be bold and innovative in curriculum delivery. I do not like singling out individual schools, but this innovation can be clearly evidenced by the outstanding work that principal Barbara Bromley, her staff and the P&C are doing at the Mindarie Primary School. In February, I met with the Clarkson Primary School principal, Tony Shields, who took me on a tour of his school. He was very proud of his school, to which lab facilities are to be added. During that tour he explained to me his plan for the classroom, and how he intends that the upgrades will facilitate what he termed K–12 STEM education. How exciting that is. This is a new vision for a competitive and modern education, because of funding allocated for science labs.

One of the only middle schools in the metropolitan area is Kinross College. It has been of great interest to me. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the principal, Rod Buckenara, and his staff to ensure that we assist in meeting their needs as best possible. In the last financial year, the government allocated necessary funds to purchase a school bus for the college, enabling the staff and students to embark on greater educational experiences off campus. This year, I am pleased to report that preliminary work will commence on planning for the \$2.5 million upgrade that our government has committed to this college. I will be delighted to address the house on the progress of this upgrade as it nears completion. As members present would know, a world-class education for our state's students will result in a world-class economy. Or, put in simpler terms, if our kids have a good education the likelihood is that they have a better chance of getting a job, and if they have a job then there is little prospect that they will be breaking into homes. Good work prospects means lower crime rates.

[Quorum formed.]

Mr M.J. FOLKARD: With the continued commitment to a minimum of 50 per cent local content on all new trains for Metronet, demand for highly qualified machinists, electricians and engineers will increase. But more importantly, the manufacturing of these trains will create work down the track, and keep our state's workers in good, sustainable blue-collar jobs. When I speak to members of my community, I hear numerous stories of how the shift from construction to production in the mining industry has caused lots of redundancies amongst our state's construction workers. Recently I heard in horror about the amount of home repossession currently in progress in my electorate, most with clear links to fly in, fly out. It breaks my heart. This has especially affected our young people. In my electorate I have pockets of youth unemployment at over 20 per cent. These kids who are completing their certificate courses are now entering into uncertain futures with little or no work, and are having to look beyond their trade to make ends meet. To those in my community experiencing this, I hear them, and I have listened to their concerns. Our government is going to fix things, and create work for them in the northern suburbs.

Our investment of \$520 million in the extension of the Joondalup line to Yanchep as part of Metronet remains. This will require thousands of workers, and inject several millions of dollars into our local economy during its construction. Most importantly, it will offer relief for Western Australians in construction who so desperately need work. Metronet's benefits are far reaching. As I have previously mentioned, the construction of the extension of the Joondalup line to Yanchep will create jobs, but it will also reduce congestion on our roads as commuting by rail becomes a viable alternative. The less time my community spends on the road commuting, the more time they can be enjoying quality time with their families. These are the kinds of planning considerations that our government makes. We think about our community—our people, our vulnerable and our kids—and we care.

The loss of lives on our roads is, I believe, entirely avoidable. It seems optimistic, but I believe it. In my time in the Western Australia Police Force I saw far too many avoidable crashes. Poor road conditions, dangerous

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behaviour and driver inexperience are the biggest killers on our roads. Making the death knock on the door of some poor family member, partner or friend of someone who has been involved in an accident is one of the hardest things I have ever had to do. Whatever we can do to stop the carnage on the roads is a noble pursuit. Whatever stops deaths on our roads should be the highest point of this government's agenda. I truly think this. This budget invests \$181.5 million into road safety initiatives, \$70 million of which will be allocated to roads in regional areas that are of high risk and in poor condition. Through better country policing, approximately 40 lives have been saved. For the time being, I can only speculate on what improving the quality of high-risk roads will do to our state's road toll. I believe that it will undoubtedly fall as a result of this allocation of funding.

In my last 14 months as member for Burns Beach, I have made it quite clear that I am also concerned about driver education. I have met with the Professional Driver Trainers Association to hear its concerns about the standards of teaching quality that our new drivers receive. I have spoken to people such as Peter Leonard, from Belgravia Driving School, who worries deeply for inexperienced drivers on the road because, like me, he sees firsthand the dangers that poor driving habits can have on road safety. My and this government's commitment to improving driver training and education is reflected in this budget. The allocation of \$2.4 million to driver training and education for regional and remote communities will make a dramatic difference, and it will save lives.

I often find myself wondering about how many lives our government could change had the previous Liberal government not devastated the state's finances. Like most Western Australians, I was disgusted by the findings of the Langoulant inquiry. If the government were a business, and the ministers the board of directors, then the Australian Securities and Investments Commission would have them all behind bars as sure as I draw breath. I was disgusted by the recklessness with which the previous government, of which the member for Riverton was Treasurer, spent our state's revenue. I spent most of my working life on the beat, but even to me, it is incredibly obvious that someone spending \$4.8 billion dollars of taxpayers' money should at least have a business plan prepared. I will quote from the report of the Langoulant inquiry —

It is notable that a significant number of projects examined did not have adequate or indeed any business cases.

This is financial mismanagement at its worst, and the victims of this—the people of Western Australia—are the ones who have to bear the burden. Mind you, given the way in which members opposite voted to block our changes to the gold royalty, I get the impression that they want the burden of budget repair to fall onto ordinary hardworking Western Australians. They want the mums and dads of our community, our battlers, to bear the burden of their incompetence. That is a crime. They do not get their mates in big business to do the lifting, let alone the heavy lifting. They do not want them to pay their fair share for operating in our state and profiting off our workers and our minerals. This is how transparent some of those present today are.

I am a proud biker. I have my Harley, and I ride for solitude and pleasure. When I ride, it also gives me the ability to disappear in plain sight. Recently, I was refuelling my bike at my local Caltex, and in front of me was a little old lady with a English accent. She was having a heated battle with the fuel attendant about the fuel discount. I watched with interest as she spoke, and it dawned on me that this individual was possibly a pensioner from the United Kingdom. If she was, she was living on a non-indexed pension, and the \$5 fuel discount she was arguing for was her next meal. She left before I could intervene, to my disappointment.

Last week was the first time in the 14 months I have been in this place that I have heard opposition members speak on a matter of public interest. They spoke about how cost-of-living increases are hurting Western Australian households, in particular low-income earners and pensioners. Let us think about that statement. Opposition members stopped the increase in the gold royalty, which was an opportunity to reduce the impact of those price increases. They ridiculed the McGowan government, which targeted increases in water charges by putting the emphasis on the heavy users of water and reducing the impact on the working poor.

Do members opposite care about the vulnerable in our state? I doubt it. I will evidence this. I listened to the debate in this house about the recent liquor licensing amendments. Not once did I hear any member opposite speak about the social consequences of saturation liquor sales. Having spent my life dealing with the violence that comes from excessive alcohol consumption, that beggars belief. It demonstrates that members opposite care about one only thing—power, and not our community

I commend the bills to the house, and I offer my congratulations once again to the Treasurer. Thank you.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Thornlie — Parliamentary Secretary) [4.02 pm]: I also wish to contribute to the debate on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2018–19) Bill 2018 and the Appropriation (Capital 2018–19) Bill 2018. After two terms in opposition during the two terms of the Barnett government, it has become a habit that I would go to the budget papers and look for any project or funding that would be directly applicable to my electorate and find next to nothing for my electorate. However, that has now changed, and wonderfully so. This time around, the

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headline item in the budget for my electorate is \$536 million for the Thornlie–Cockburn train line. That is a tribute to the approach that is being taken by this government. The government is not afraid to spend on areas of Perth that need some lifting up and level of investment. That funding will make a great difference to people's lives.

More broadly, it reflects the philosophy of this government about the importance of connectedness. I think that is what this budget is in many ways about. It is about ensuring not only a geographic connectedness but also a mobility connectedness. That includes social mobility. That is very important. If we as local members are to do our job well, we need to ensure that we build our communities and enable people to interact, find new work opportunities, have strong family lives and be big contributors to our society. That is all beginning to bear fruit now that the McGowan government is finding its way and getting on with things.

I saw a beautiful demonstration of this last night when for the first time I was able to cross the new bridge over the train line on Nicholson Road and enjoy a six-lane experience, with no boom gate problems, and wonderful slipways into Yale Road. I commend Main Roads WA for managing to complete this project so successfully. I look forward to resuming discussions with the people from Main Roads about how the large roundabout at Nicholson Road–Yale Road–Garden Street will be negotiated. That includes at peak hours, with discussions about traffic metering on that roundabout.

The \$536 million spend includes train stations at Nicholson Road and Ranford Road. This was raised by the member for Southern River. It is important that we continue to discuss with the communities their hopes and aspirations for those train stations. The basic model is for a train station situated in the middle of a sea of asphalt that will be used for car parking. However, there may be other higher-value land uses that we should look at. I am particularly interested that right near where the new Nicholson Road train station will be located is a large yellow warehouse that covers some four hectares of land and is occupied by a company called easyauto123.com.au. That is clearly a poor use of that land. That land is located in the City of Canning. I am sure the City of Canning is an eager as I am for that land to be rezoned to enable it to be developed to its optimum use. Making sure that we get the development around stations right is all part of the connectedness that I have talked about and ensuring that we provide people with opportunities.

Another exciting project in my electorate is in Maddington. I commend the government on its announcement this week about the creation of 5 000 dwellings through its The Precincts project. That sounds tremendous. That project will be spread over a number of areas. It is interesting that the old Maddington oval site provides the potential for 4 000 dwellings. This is yet another example of how this government is investing in areas in which people have struggled for a long time, in which crime rates are high, and in which property values are fairly stagnant. This investment will lift the suburb of Maddington and provide people with access to public transport to give them options other than relying on their cars. All sorts of opportunities come with that kind of investment. It is all about renewal. That makes me think that the discussion around urban sprawl is probably moot when we look at the amount of land in my electorate that is suitable for brownfields development in one form or another. This project will provide thousands of dwellings, without the need to push people way out to the fringes of the city.

I have said that one of the core philosophies of this government is connectedness. As a local member, a very important part of my job is to make sure that people are part of an organisation or can reach out to organisations when they need to do so. However, the reality is that there are people in our community who are isolated. In the western world, there is a growing national and international discussion about the problem of loneliness and isolation. We need to work to counter that problem. That is perhaps one of the root causes of domestic violence. I commend this budget for the \$4.3 million that will be spent to implement the National Domestic Violence Order Scheme. Such initiatives are very important. I was at a session on the weekend with Save the Children and there was a realisation that amongst people who are newly arrived in the country, again, because of that isolation factor that is not only geographic, but also sometimes cultural, there is a problem with domestic violence. I commend Save the Children on the work that it is doing to ensure that people are able to reach out and discuss this problem before it becomes an issue in a family. People are able to talk about the problems that they are facing and counter it from the start by making sure that people are involved in sporting clubs and what have you. I refer to the Communicare initiative that I have spoken about before in this place. The My Sport Night Fields program is a collaboration with the Gosnells police, the City of Gosnells, the Gosnells Football Club and many other organisations. It brings people together on a Wednesday evening, using a wonderful oval that otherwise would not be used. It is a tremendous way to counter that sense of isolation that many can feel. These sorts of developments give people wonderful opportunities.

In passing, I was looking at some research on the issue of family and domestic violence. An article made the comparison between the profile and the expenditure that is put towards countering terrorism versus the amount that is put towards countering family and domestic violence. The article made the point that between 2002 and 2012, 488 women were killed across Australia in homicides perpetrated by their current or former partners, whereas in the previous two decades five people were killed in terrorist attacks in Australia. Our media and the

general policy discussion are very focused on terrorism, but forget or want to avoid the issue of domestic violence. In this place, we all need to work towards countering that. To see that, we need only look at the front page of today's local paper—some might call it “The Daily Mail on Swan”. The top third was about the royal wedding, the next third was about terrorism and the bottom third was about sharks. There is the public policy discussion from that media outlet. We have to work as leaders of our communities to counter that.

This budget funds many great initiatives. I commend the Treasurer, the Premier and all the ministers on their work. I refer to an issue that I raised when I was in opposition—that is, the subsidy going to the mining sector through the exploration incentive scheme. I note the clever way that we are turning that around. We realise that there is still a need to provide that exploration incentive scheme, but we have to develop a mechanism by which the industry can contribute to, and be the beneficiary of, that. The shift towards cost recovery in such areas as environmental assessment of projects makes perfect sense, and the saving there is \$19.4 million. There is a range of other really sensible initiatives.

I commend this budget to the house and acknowledge the great role that the government is playing in ensuring that we have strong connected communities that have access to good-quality public transport. We are maximising the land available in our inner suburbs. I am starting to call my suburb, Thornlie, an inner outer suburb. We are maximising the opportunity of property development and giving people high-quality accommodation, which is absolutely essential. We do not want to see the endless pattern of battleaxe-type infill housing. We need high-quality developments that will be an attractive alternative. For some people it is a reasonable choice, but for many it is difficult because they have to spend many hours commuting to dwellings on the city's outer limits. I commend the budget to the house.

MRS R.M.J. CLARKE (Murray–Wellington) [4.15 pm]: I rise to speak on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2018–19) Bill 2018 and the Appropriation (Capital 2018–19) Bill 2018, and our sensible and responsible budget. The McGowan Labor government's budget for 2018–19 is creating jobs for people in the regions and investing in projects that make real differences in local communities. Investments have been made in regional roads, community services, environmental protection and emergency services. Alongside this, funding has been given to major projects and schemes that will drive economic growth in regional areas. Furthermore, commitments have been made to the once overlooked electorate of Murray–Wellington. The McGowan government is making these investments while also maintaining responsible financial management and the delivery of low general government expense growth, ensuring that we stay on track to reduce state debt and return to surplus.

As our regional towns change and grow, road upgrades and improvements are needed to ensure that the roads remain safe and fit for purpose. This budget has included \$70 million towards improving regional roads that are identified as high risk for run-off crashes. This is an important step in keeping our roads safe for not only the local communities that use them every day, but also the tourists who use these roads when travelling through the regions and, in many cases, the truck drivers who use these roads as part of their job. This is in addition to the previously announced funding of \$18.5 million over four years for the regional enforcement unit, which is increasing traffic enforcement on regional roads and making them safer.

Importantly, one of the largest road projects in the south west, the Bunbury Outer Ring Road, has received a contribution of \$106.3 million in this budget. In areas such as Australind in the southern part of Murray–Wellington, many people work in or regularly travel into Bunbury. The construction of the outer ring-road is important to them as it will alleviate traffic issues on other major connecting roads such as Old Coast Road, Forrest Highway and South Western Highway. The road will also help facilitate development at Bunbury port, which will help industries grow right across the south west. Overall, more than \$2 billion will be spent on the state's regional roads between 2018–19 and 2021–22. Emergency services and bushfire mitigation in the regions have been addressed in this budget. The McGowan government has acted on the recommendations of the Ferguson report into the 2016 Waroona–Yarloop fires and established the rural fire division. This is the largest investment that any state government has ever made into emergency services in the regions. The rural fire division will bring record improvements in rural fire management, ensuring that our volunteers have the best access to bushfire training and expertise. The division will also aim to improve the relationship through the appointment of volunteer liaison officers to facilitate communication between volunteers, the department and the government. Volunteers also will be given a greater say in bushfire management in rural areas. This announcement has been very warmly welcomed by the people in my electorate of Murray–Wellington, and I strongly commend the McGowan government for establishing the rural fire division.

Mitigating the risk of bushfires is extremely important, but so is how we as a government assist areas that have been ravaged by bushfires. The town of Yarloop is still rebuilding after the 2016 fires. This budget shows the government's commitment to helping the town rebuild and recover. An amount of \$800 000 in additional funding has been allocated towards the clean-up of Yarloop, which at this stage of the recovery process will make an immense difference to the town getting back on its feet. Funding for community programs and facilities in the

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regions has been provided in the budget, with \$9.3 million towards an alcohol and drug residential rehabilitation and treatment service in the south west and \$20.5 million across the state for the Target 120 program for early intervention with young offenders. These two projects are vital for local communities as they will provide help to people and their families when it is needed most, and give those people the best possible opportunity to reintegrate into the community.

The Find Cancer Early campaign in regional areas has been expanded, and the McGowan government continues to fund the patient assisted travel scheme to support people in the regions when they need to travel for important medical treatment. We are also assisting our volunteers and seniors with the continuation of the Country Age Pension Fuel Card and the volunteer fuel card. We are committed to assisting those most vulnerable in the regions, in Murray–Wellington in particular. Youth in the Peel region are receiving much-needed mental health support through the construction of the Peel youth health hub and the ongoing tier 3 youth mental health program, which works with schools across the region to help our at-risk youth. There has also been \$4.4 million allocated to upgrades at Peel Health Campus, the first investment made at the hospital since the previous Carpenter Labor government.

Tourism in the regions is being supported through funding of \$39.7 million over four years to showcase our regional destinations and the spectacular environment that attracts people to the south west, and Peel is being protected through the establishment and management of Leschenault Regional Park and the development of a comprehensive estuary protection plan for the Peel–Harvey estuary. The environment and health of the Peel estuary and the Leschenault Peninsula is incredibly important both to local residents and to tourism in the area, and by having effective plans and management in place for these areas, we are ensuring that these pristine environments can be retained for years to come.

Importantly, the McGowan government is investing in projects that will drive economic activity and investment across the Peel and south west regions. The regional economic development grants scheme will encourage economic development in the regions through community-driven initiatives that have the ability to bring immediate economic activity into every region across Western Australia. This follows the already announced new industries fund, which will support new and emerging businesses in the regions to help build their businesses, leading to more job creation in those industries.

Within the electorate of Murray–Wellington two major projects will create economic growth and jobs right across the electorate. The first project is Transform Peel, comprising the Peel food zone, Peel Business Park and the Peel integrated water initiative, which is located at Nambeelup just east of Mandurah. The Transform Peel project will diversify the economy and create thousands of jobs for the region, as well as securing food production for the greater Perth metropolitan area. The McGowan government understands the importance of this project not only for the Peel region but also for the greater Perth area, and has allocated just under \$50 million for the project, including \$25.2 million in this year's budget. The second project is Kemerton Industrial Park, where investment is already underway. Located north of Australind, funding has already been allocated towards railway access to the park and towards creating opportunities for local businesses there. Strategically located near Bunbury port, this park has the potential to be a major economic hub for the south west.

After the federal coalition government previously dragged its feet on funding the Myalup–Wellington water project, federal funding has finally been secured for the project to go ahead, along with a \$37 million commitment from the McGowan government. This project will bring in new agricultural activity across the south west by providing access to more water for irrigation in the region. Agriculture in the area is also being developed through the Myalup primary industries reserve development, which allows access to 2 000 hectares of land in the Myalup and McLarty state forests for future irrigated agriculture, creating jobs for the south west, particularly in Murray–Wellington, and expanding the state's horticulture industry.

There are also a number of important projects that already began in last year's budget and are continuing this year. One of these is the continuation of and guaranteed funding for the south west emergency rescue helicopter, which provides an invaluable service to those who need immediate transportation to Perth in emergency situations. The *Australind* train service is undergoing a much-needed upgrade, with work already beginning on upgrading Yarloop train station so that it meets current disability standards. Once completed, the entire service will be revitalised, with new railcars and upgraded stations in Yarloop, Cookernup and North Dandalup. This was overlooked for far too long by the previous government.

We have and are continuing to put education assistants and Aboriginal and Islander education officers back into regional classrooms, giving students the assistance they need to succeed in school. Two schools in Murray–Wellington have been the recipients of science labs to ensure regional students have the opportunity to gain greater access to science learnings.

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The McGowan Labor government is getting on with its plan for jobs by investing in projects that will create real economic growth for the regions, encourage development in new and emerging industries, and diversify the economy. We are managing the finances responsibly and spending the scarce money we have in the areas that really make a difference in local communities. The government has given regional areas certainty over how bushfire mitigation will be managed through the establishment of the rural fire division. Our regional roads are being made safer, our unique environment is being protected, and important community services are receiving the support they need to reach positive outcomes for those whom they serve. Every single project and initiative the government has invested in throughout Murray–Wellington will create local jobs for local people in the regions.

The McGowan government is putting the state to work by creating jobs, Western Australia’s economy is turning the corner, confidence is returning, and local jobs are being created. This government is for all Western Australians. I am proud to represent the electorate of Murray–Wellington under a McGowan Labor government. We are getting on with the job and we are in this together—all Western Australians.

MR M. HUGHES (Kalamunda) [4.26 pm]: I, too, rise to make a contribution to the debate on the budget bills—the Appropriation (Recurrent 2018–19) Bill 2018 and the Appropriation (Capital 2018–19) Bill 2018. At the outset, I commend the Treasurer, Premier and ministers for their hard work in delivering what the community broadly sees as an eminently fair and responsible budget for the people of Western Australia—the second, as we have heard, in only eight months. It is important that we look at the 2018–19 state budget in the context of the government’s overall strategic commitment to responsible financial management and its determination to balance the books, to return to surpluses and thereby begin the long-haul process of reducing the state’s accumulated debt position—the legacy of the previous government. This commitment is in stark contrast to the unrestrained profligacy of the Liberal–National government over its eight years, six months and five days in office. This budget is both prudent and carefully crafted.

What does this budget do? It delivers historically low expenditure growth and a projected return to surplus by 2020–21. That has arrested the unsustainable growth in expenditure and net debt inherited from the previous government. Over the last three days my parliamentary colleagues have closely examined the facts of the budget. The opposition has taken the predictable tack—as we heard this morning from the Leader of the Opposition and shadow Treasurer—of muddying those facts and perpetuating the line that the budget is all “smoke and mirrors”; that expression was also used by the Leader of the Nationals WA this afternoon.

It is in that context that I think the following bears repeating. The 2018–19 budget forecasts low rates of expense growth, at an average of 1.2 per cent for the period 2018 to 2022. I think members of the opposition should give that a tick. This is, as we have heard, well below the annual average growth in expenditure of 6.7 per cent over the past decade. This budget halts and reverses the noticeable upswing in expense growth of the previous government’s budgets over 2014–15, 2015–16 and 2016–17, following a significant dip in expenditure growth in 2014–15, compared with the seven per cent or so of 2013–14. The low rate of expense growth achieved in this budget reflects the reprioritisation of existing expenditure by the McGowan government and the cumulative effect of its savings measures across the period of the forward estimates.

Prudent financial management is already the clearly established hallmark of the McGowan Labor government. I know that for members opposite it sticks in their collective craw and that of the Liberal and National Parties outside this place that vaunt themselves as superior in knowledge and skills with regard to the management of the state’s finances. How hollow does that particular claim ring in the context of the way in which they left the state’s finances when they left office? The only financial plan the opposition offered the state prior to the March 2017 election was to sell off Western Power to pay off some of the massive debt accumulated across the Barnett and Nahan years. That was the smoke and mirrors presented to the electorate in the run-up to the last election. The Liberal Party had no plan for expenditure restraint and curtailing the wanton and uncontrolled splashing of the cash from the royalties for regions bucket. Members opposite need to read the Langouant report and to learn a lesson or two. It points to the Liberal–National government’s lack of rigour with projects funded under royalties for regions, and a lack of rigorous oversight. Members may care to be reminded that royalties for regions did not have a strategic plan from 2008 in its inception, until 2016–17 when the first plan was developed—that is telling; talk about financial mismanagement. If re-elected to government, the cycle would have begun again. Members opposite have no coherent plan in opposition, and, in fact, the opposition has no coherence.

Dr D.J. Honey: You are in government; it is your job.

Mr M. HUGHES: Members opposite are the alternative government and they are not doing a particularly good job at demonstrating their capacity to return to government—certainly not going by the member for Cottesloe’s contribution to date.

What is the current state of the finances just 14 months after the general election—not eight years, six months and five days, members opposite? Let us remind ourselves of it. The estimated general government operating deficit

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for 2017–18 stands at \$1.3 billion, which has halved since the *Government Mid-year Financial Projections Statement*. Expense growth, as we have heard, has been contained to just 0.9 per cent—as close to zero as we can possibly can get—with a forecast average across the forward estimates of 1.2 per cent. These are very good figures. Members opposite should listen and learn in case they ever get back into government. The revenue outlook has stabilised with revenue expected to grow by an estimated, relatively modest, 3.5 per cent during the budget period. Operating deficits are slated to decline year on year with a projected return to surplus by 2020–21. The improving outlook has seen a significant \$3.2 billion improvement on the forecast level of net debt when compared with the 2017–18 budget. No congratulations from members opposite—my goodness! The Treasurer said prior to the 2017 general election that in office Labor would tackle the inherited, historically massive accumulated projected debt of the previous Liberal–National government, slowly and methodically, and members opposite decry this statement like paying off a mortgage once expenditure can be brought under control with the generation of surpluses. The generation of surpluses will pay down debt. The selling of state assets is a chicken way to deal with the inheritance that the opposition left my grandchildren.

The prime and major issue to be tackled by government, which the previous government failed to do, was to write structural imbalances into the state’s finances created by the previous government’s policies. The Mark McGowan government has shown itself up to the task. The path to surplus is clearly ahead of this state government. Intelligence and competence has produced a disciplined approach towards recurrent expenditure management. We have heard that the Leader of the Opposition seems to think that this has just fallen into the Treasurer’s lap and, therefore, he has not done any hard work. I do not accept that. This government’s approach combined with a more stable outlook for the state’s revenue stream, results in declining forecast operating deficits for 2018–19 of \$906 million and 2019–20 of \$160 million, before returning to a surplus in 2020–21—the first surplus since 2013–14. I cannot hear even one small congratulatory statement from members opposite!

Dr D.J. Honey: They are made-up numbers.

Mr M. HUGHES: They are not made up.

Mr W.R. Marmion interjected.

Mr M. HUGHES: Very good. I thank the member.

Most importantly, the outlook for this financial year is underpinned by lowering current spending growth, and the capacity for this government to successfully negotiate with the federal government for additional funding towards priority infrastructure projects, including Metronet, its station precincts and all the economic stimulus that Metronet will bring to this state’s economy. In total, \$3.6 billion has been allocated to Metronet projects.

The combination of stronger, general government sector operating results are expected to see total net debt reach \$40.9 billion by 30 June 2020, before declining to \$39.7 billion by the end of the forward estimates period. Surely members opposite could show a modicum of praise for this turnaround. Despite the claims of members opposite that we support the working poor, the government’s reasonable and fair measures to repair the budget have been taken in such a way to ensure that any impact on struggling families and small-to-medium businesses will be kept to a minimum. I am surprised that members opposite cannot accept the fact that this government has done all it can to ensure that households are not impacted worse than they might have been had the government not taken a more prudent approach to the reprioritisation of its budget forecasts. It is worth underscoring that without the budget repair measures instigated by the WA Labor government, net debt would have risen to more than \$47.2 billion under the legacy left by the opposition when in government. Importantly, the government is on track to meet all its financial targets by 2021. The policies of this government extend beyond repairing the state government’s finances, and to the state’s economic activity. The state government’s determination is to do all it can to create new jobs and new apprenticeships by investing in key WA economic infrastructure, and with it the development of a local skilled workforce. This approach is the driver for the intentional diversification of the WA economy. Although members opposite do not like to hear these facts, around 30 000 additional Western Australians have already joined the workforce since March 2017. As our economy recovers, business confidence is returning, having reached its highest level in the March 2018 quarter in more than seven years. The result is that as we speak, WA’s labour force participation rate is one of the highest across the country. The business community roundly endorses the government’s comprehensive plan and the smarts displayed by the WA Labor government. We have heard this in question time over the last week, but I would like to add a further example. I will quote from the recent press release of the Property Council of Australia. It states —

Linking the Government’s public housing investment plan with METRONET and partnering with industry is a smart ... move. This answers questions from industry about how some of the more marginal station precincts can be established with a diversity of housing options.

It states other things but concludes with —

Overall this is a steady budget with a strong infrastructure focus to encourage private investment in the METRONET precincts plan in Perth and key regional centres. This is underpinned by a welcome commitment to reduce the Budget deficit and bringing down State debt.

The member for Dawesville seems very interested in my electorate and me. I am not sure why.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: Because we are going to take it back.

Mr M. HUGHES: We will see what happens. Importantly —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr M. HUGHES: That is interesting. We will put a bit more effort in next time, I think.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr M. HUGHES: When the opposition benches were empty this afternoon, bar the Whip, bearing in mind what was said about Darling Range, I thought members were on their phones already or doing a bit of doorknocking. I am not quite sure what they were doing this afternoon, but here they are now.

What does the state budget mean for my electorate? Importantly, it means that the government is financially prudent. As I said in September last year, in broad terms, my electorate has received the comfort of knowing that there is a set of competent and responsible hands governing this state at long last. That is what the people wanted and called for at the March 2017 election and it is what the people have got. The government's first budget struck the right balance to restore responsible financial management to the state and to help drive economic growth to create new jobs for Western Australians. The second budget continues in that vein.

One of the important pre-election commitments was to the Local Projects, Local Jobs program, which amounted to \$39 million for 750 projects across the metropolitan area. I am particularly pleased that my electorate received a total of \$911 000 in grants towards 25 projects and that a number of them have been completed in the first year of this government's term of office. I will not bore members with the list. Those community groups in my electorate are very appreciative. They include local schools and the bush fire brigades that have benefited from the program. As I mentioned last year, the Local Projects, Local Jobs program is about supporting local, grassroots initiatives that can make a big difference in local communities across the state. I believe that a small amount of government funding invested will go a long way towards supporting the work of community groups in our electorates. Treasurer, if we ever get around to doing it, I think it is a project that is well worth repeating.

As part of the pre-election commitments to my electorate, the City of Kalamunda was promised a \$3 million allocation towards a community hub project. The City of Kalamunda has determined that the location of the community hub should be the site of the existing learning centre in Jorgensen Park. The city has requested that the funding be directed towards that learning centre, which will be the principal user of the facilities. I have been working very closely with the government to deliver that funding in as timely a fashion as possible.

The member for Dawesville mentioned the intersection of Kalamunda Road and Roe Highway. Unlike the member, I am not preoccupied by what might benefit just me and my election promises directly in my electorate. The intersection is the main intersection for people who commute to work from Kalamunda, Lesmurdie and Gooseberry Hill. It is a major problem and has been for many, many years. The former government did nothing about it, as well as not doing a lot of things in my electorate, particularly regarding a couple of schools, which I will come to in a moment.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr M. HUGHES: I am pleased for my parliamentary colleague the member for Forrestfield; the intersection is in his electorate. The intersection currently prevents the distribution of traffic up and down the hill. A commitment of \$86 million, as part of a \$2.3 billion road and rail and infrastructure commitment, jointly funded by the state and federal governments, is very welcomed. I have a few facts. The Roe Highway–Kalamunda Road intersection is one of the last remaining signalised intersections on Roe Highway. It is heavily congested, leading to a higher than average number of crashes, member for Dawesville, and some of those people actually live up the hill.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup interjected.

Mr M. HUGHES: Of course, but I have a broader interest in the way in which this government makes decisions about the distribution of funding across the state in metropolitan, rural and regional areas. I think we are doing an excellent job.

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Several members interjected.

Mr M. HUGHES: I could pass this information to members so they could read about some of the things that have occurred across the Perth metropolitan region and in rural areas.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange interjected.

Mr M. HUGHES: We will wait for the questions in estimates; they were not particularly edifying last time.

We are very pleased to have funding for that intersection and we thank the government for it. I also believe that the project will provide upwards of 600 jobs over the period of its construction, which is welcome. I might add that the jobs will be across the state, for people outside my electorate as well, member for Dawesville.

The budget also provides a further \$14.684 million for the completion of the much-needed upgrade of Great Eastern Highway between Bilgoman Road and Mundaring, which is in my electorate, member for Dawesville.

The budget also allocates an additional \$128 million investment in fire and emergency services over the next four years, which includes \$80 million to establish a dedicated rural fire division within the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. I am very pleased that, in a period of 14 months since taking office, the McGowan government has taken effective action and responded to recommendation 15 of the Ferguson report by establishing a dedicated rural fire division. Despite commentary to the contrary, this is welcome news for rural and peri-urban fringe hills communities and, as I gather from comments made to me by locals, is welcomed by the volunteer bush fire brigades that serve our hills areas.

Member for Dawesville, during the election campaign I placed the increased provision of high-needs aged care as my number one priority. I wish to reassure people in my electorate that I am working with the government on this commitment to improve the delivery of residential aged-care facilities across the state, not just in my electorate, member for Dawesville. Last year, the Minister for Planning took action to approve the scheme amendment to permit the Gavour Road aged-care development in the City of Kalamunda. In March this year, the government reinforced its commitment in an announcement made by the Premier, the Minister for Planning and the Minister for Health on the allocation of government land across the state, including land adjacent to the Sunshine Park Village residential aged-care facility in Lesmurdie for its expansion needs. The WA Labor government is committed to identifying government land suitable for aged-care facilities and making it available for this purpose in keeping with its pre-election commitment. This will be achieved by fast-tracking the approval processes involved in the establishment of additional aged-care facilities, thus freeing up public hospital beds and improving the quality of life of the elderly. The commitment includes not only identifying land that may be suitable for aged-care facilities, but also, importantly, removing planning and local government impediments to facilitate increasing the availability of those facilities. In keeping with this pledge, I am pleased to remind the house of the establishment of the interdepartmental aged-care availability working group, jointly chaired by the Departments of Health and Planning. I have been appointed an ex-officio member of that group.

Members will be aware of my strong interest in education. The 2018–19 budget provides for significant, continuing investment in school infrastructure in metropolitan, rural and remote areas across the state and, with it, the creation of jobs. The capital works program will ensure that students in metropolitan, rural and regional Western Australia are learning in the best possible environments. This government is fully committed to ensuring that all students, regardless of where they live, receive a high-quality education. To that end, a total of \$22.2 billion will be invested in education over the next four years, including \$1.2 billion to build and improve WA schools to ensure that students learn in modern school facilities.

In closing, I again would like to raise a concern I have about the condition of buildings at a number of schools in my electorate. I am glad that the Treasurer is here. As I said during my contribution to the two 2017–18 budget appropriation bills last September, my electorate and I are well aware of the constraints placed upon this government and the pre-election commitments and priorities it brought to the people. I am, however, particularly of the view that the majority of the buildings at Lesmurdie Primary School, excluding those provided by the Building the Education Revolution funding, a Labor initiative, are well beyond their use-by date and need replacing. As I have said previously, to continue to patch and repair the buildings is, in the view of the school council—I share that view—simply throwing good money after bad. This is a longstanding issue for this community. The community does not expect this government to overturn its existing priorities but we need to help that community and it should be the intention of this government to do something about those facilities.

Kalamunda Senior High School is managing with 17 demountable or transportable classrooms. Although they provide teaching spaces, they fall well short of what we should expect to provide in all our schools. These are not first-class facilities. The students attending Kalamunda Senior High School and Lesmurdie Primary School deserve better. My goal in the time that I have in this place, member for Dawesville, short or long, is to ensure that they get what they deserve. Quite rightly, my community benchmarks the provision of its schools against the schools

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being built in developing suburbs. Schools built for this century rather than the last century should be the schools to which we send our children. This is a difficult but not impossible task. Kalamunda Senior High School provides an excellent comprehensive education and has a specialist performing arts program but it is constrained significantly by the lack of specialist learning facilities for its programs. Its dance program takes place in a storage space under the stage. The students are not able to lift themselves to shoulder height for fear of hitting their heads on the fans on the ceiling, and we have to do something about that, member for Dawesville. Equally, the co-located education support centre struggles because less-than-adequate teacher preparation areas are available. It is time that these schools are provided with the opportunity to give a clear statement of their needs to the education department and provided with a clear indication of when they can expect to be placed on the list of school upgrades. Again, it is not a criticism of this government; it is more a consequence of the legacy left by the previous government. Governments have to make choices when prudently balancing the priorities and finite resources. I thank the Treasurer for what he is doing in this area for the state. I also understand that governments are required to keep faith with their pre-election commitments.

The McGowan government, in the face of the extent and the severity of the financial problems left as a legacy by the previous government, is keeping faith with its central commitments to the people of Western Australia to build a better future for all the people of Western Australia. I commend the budget to the house.

MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park — Treasurer) [4.53 pm] — in reply: I thank all members for their contribution to the second reading of the budget. I am sure that all members would be pleased to know that I will not be responding in detail to all issues raised during the debate. It is always interesting listening to members reflect on the budget. Obviously, some very kind words were said by members of the government and very unkind, unfair words were said by members of the opposition, as is often the case. I enjoy listening to members from electorates far and wide around our vast state and the issues that they raise. Along the way, there are unique issues to individual electorates but, by and large, the issues do not surprise me. At a state government level, they are very much focused around the issues that dominate a budget: the delivery of essential services, upgrades to those services, and the impacts on fees and charges, which of course all governments spend a lot of time fretting and thinking over before decisions are made. I enjoy the parliamentary debates and second reading contributions around the budget because we get a sense of issues that are dominating the minds of all members of this place.

Obviously, budget estimates will be the time when all members get the opportunity to cross-examine ministers around the details of the budget, and I look forward to that occurring next week. I thank all members again for their contribution to the second reading debate on the budget.

Questions put and passed.

Bills read a second time.

Pursuant to standing order 222, bills and estimates referred to Estimates Committees A and B.