

Ms Kim Giddens; Hon Dave Kelly; Ms Merome Beard; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Reece Whitby;
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PREMIER'S STATEMENT

Consideration

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MS K.E. GIDDENS (Bateman) [3.00 pm]: Prior to question time, I was talking about the 1 200 residents who I canvassed directly, either through phone calls or by doorknocking, in the Applecross and Mt Pleasant area about the *Canning Bridge activity centre plan* review. I heard loudly from those residents that the bonus height provisions had not delivered the outcomes they wanted for the area; that the plan failed to deliver any clearly defined community benefits; and that the toilet blocks and bike racks at the bottom of the building did not provide the amenity the community wanted from the density of that area. They raised concern also about the loss of tree canopy and the street amenity, parking and traffic, and the community space. As the local member, I cannot wave a magic wand to address or make perfect everything in the system. However, what I can do is commit to engage with the local community and to then take those concerns to the relevant bodies, such as the City of Melville, to ensure that work is done on developing a clear community benefit framework that describes what the residents of Applecross want for the Canning Bridge precinct and to ensure that the activity centre plan delivers on that vision, and, of course, have regular communication with the Minister for Planning, which I do. The minister is absolutely across these issues. There is no conflict between the development density in these key transport precincts and delivering amenity. The two are not at odds with each other. A clear vision is required for the community activation to ensure that the benefits go to that area and the amenity of the Applecross and Canning Bridge precinct is retained. That is what I will work with the City of Melville and the Minister for Planning to ensure. My message is that no single planning document, no matter how thorough or good, can deliver on a vision for a community. It will require leadership and ongoing engagement so that for every development application that comes up, the community voice is heard and reflected.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms K.E. GIDDENS: A good example of this model is Leederville Connect that is based on the Town Teams movement. I have spoken to planning experts and developers who say that if they submit an application for a development in Leederville in the City of Vincent, they are told to go first to Leederville Connect because its voice is respected and taken into consideration. That is the kind of community-based model that I see helping to realise the vision that the people of Applecross and Mt Pleasant want for the Canning Bridge area, and that is what I will support.

I have talked a lot about the achievements of the government over the past two years, and I am proud of those achievements, but I want to move briefly to something a little more personal. Last year was probably the most difficult I have had in my life. It was due to very significant health concerns with one of my children. Parents in this room and anyone with a degree of empathy will know that if your child is not okay, you are not okay. My son was diagnosed with a disability at the beginning of last year. It was not that disability per se, but the continuing deterioration he experienced that rapidly affected our life, his life and his ability to participate in school and all of the normal activities that until that point we had taken for granted as a family. This impact was so severe that our household considered whether my husband would have to leave his employment. Obviously, a range of medical tests and specialist appointments were required to secure the support that was required for him.

I raise this for two reasons. The first is that this Parliament—those on our side in particular—absolutely reflects the community. It is so important that we have these lived experiences that our constituents experience all the time; that we bring to our policy and decision-making the empathy and lived understanding of how difficult it can be. I am very proud to stand in this Parliament as not only a member of the government, but a Labor member because it is Labor governments that build the social infrastructure that is critical for families in their time of need. I refer to infrastructure such as Medicare and the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The systems are not perfect. There is ongoing need for improvement. It was really difficult to get the support that at times we need. However, it is important that the values that underpin our decision-making and where we invest our money reflect the most vulnerable in our community. I am not for a second suggesting that I was the most vulnerable because I came to this experience from a position of relative privilege, so how extremely difficult must it be for others? That is the first point I want to make.

I mentioned Medicare, the social infrastructure and the NDIS, an incredible program that supports families and people with disabilities. At a state level, the McGowan government has been no different when prioritising the most vulnerable in our community. I know much has been said about the challenges in the health system—and there are. We do not resile from those challenges. Those on our side tackle the problems. We do not ignore them; we know they are there. We have seen a more than 30 per cent increase in nurses and midwives, for example. We

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have seen a 266 per cent increase in the number of healthcare professionals in 2022 alone. We have seen more than 1 500 doctors and medical workers and, really importantly for my family, 1 400 allied health workers. The investment is ongoing. In addition, a \$150 000 grant was made recently to Epilepsy WA and \$9.6 million to double the free accommodation services at Ronald McDonald House Charities. My electorate of Bateman is close to the city, and Ronald McDonald House Charities is not a service that members of my community would call upon. However, it is critical that we support those in regional areas across Western Australia when considering those who are in need at some of the most trying times of their life. I am proud to belong to this government and I am proud to be a Labor member.

The second reason I raise my personal experience over the past 12 months is to say some thank-yous because I cannot deliver on what I am proud to deliver in the electorate of Bateman without support, and I cannot stand here without acknowledging the significant support I receive. With that in mind, I start with my electorate team—Karen Wheatland and Shaun Hawkes. They are an amazing team. They keep things running and I am proud of what they do.

I acknowledge our Whip, the member for Belmont, Cassie Rowe. She is always fair and understanding and I appreciate all the support she has given me over the past 12 months. I thank Dr Jags, the member for Riverton, for his wise counsel always and for being so willing to help. And, of course, I thank my friends and family. I want to give a very special shout-out—I am going to get emotional—to Mrs Roula Atallah, a special needs and mainstream education assistant at Bateman Primary School. Roula is everything that is good about humankind. She is patient. She has empathy. She is caring. She is professional. She is skilled. She is generous. She would go home after a day at work and spend her own money to buy the ingredients for a cooking day as an activity and then come into school to engage with my son. I cannot thank her enough and I cannot thank enough the leadership of Bateman Primary School. I give acknowledgement to the principal, Marc Lockett. I am very proud to have Bateman Primary School in my electorate and I am very proud to send my children there. I thank them very much for all they do.

There is a Roula in every school—an education assistant who goes above and beyond. They are the gold that we need in our schools. I could not have done my job as a teacher without them all. I take this opportunity to thank all education assistants across Western Australia for the work they do to support all children in their learning outcomes, but particularly the most vulnerable.

With that said, I want to make a brief observation on the leadership of the opposition in this place. I congratulate the member for Moore and the member for Vasse for taking on new leadership positions and I thank the outgoing member for Central Wheatbelt and member for Cottesloe.

I want to turn a little bit from offering my congratulations to raising an issue of concern. My concern is that the new Leader of the Opposition chose, in his very first question time, to raise concerns about the elevation of two women to the cabinet. In the *'Enough is enough': Sexual harassment against women in the FIFO mining industry* report, we noted that the drivers of gender inequality are complex and exist throughout our society, so I cannot be silent. That was a line of questioning that the new Leader of the Opposition—leader—chose to ask about the elevation of two women into cabinet. It is a disgrace. I really sincerely hope that the quality of the opposition improves, but we now know what the opposition's strategy is. Apparently, politicians do not win elections from opposition; the government loses them. No hard work is required to wait around for a government to lose. At some point, the wave of entitlement will wash the opposition into government; that is the apparent goal of the current opposition. I want to say that we are not taking anything for granted. We do not expect that we will wait for fate to determine what we do, the policies we support and the clear vision we have for our communities. Every day, we will be out there and in this place, working as local members to deliver the best outcomes for our communities and for the people of Western Australia.

MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean) [3.11 pm]: I am very pleased to rise to make a contribution to this debate. I was very pleased that in the Premier's Statement, the Premier was very plain that 2023 will not be a year in which the government slows down. In that statement, he outlined a number of really important agenda items that the government will be progressing, and I want to comment on a couple of those.

Before I do that, I want to say a couple of things. The first is to acknowledge one of the principals in my electorate. The reason I want to do that is because Len Christie, the principal of Beechboro Primary School, is currently on extended sick leave, so I want to give Len a shout-out. Len is really one of the outstanding principals in my electorate, and there are quite a few of them. Len stands out because he came to Beechboro Primary School in 1994 as principal, so next year will be his thirtieth year as principal at that school. I know when I am going to an event—for example, an assembly—at Beechboro Primary School, I had better have my tie on and make sure that my shoes are polished because Len runs a very tight ship. He is very proud of his school. The real test of what we think of a school in our electorate is whether we would send our own kids there. I would send my kids to Beechboro Primary School in

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a heartbeat because of his leadership and his great staff. I want to mention Len, and I hope he is doing well in his recovery. I hope to see him back next year for his thirtieth year as principal.

I want to thank his two deputies. Vanda Mort is the acting principal while Len is away. She does a great job, and I know it is a great comfort for Len to know that he has an outstanding deputy in charge while he is away. Also, she could not do it without the team that she has. Sarah Barton is the other deputy. I spoke to Vanda this morning, and she said that it has been a hectic start to the year, but they are getting through it. The member for Bateman might be interested that Vanda said to me that for the first time the school has an all-female executive. She is very happy to have Len come back, of course, but she thinks having an all-female leadership team at the school for the first time is pretty special. I hope Len gets better, and I hope to see him back at Beechboro soon. To the great, outstanding team that is running the show while Len is away—Vanda, Sarah and the others—I say thank you very much.

I wanted to do another thing before I got onto the government's agenda. As people in the house know, I finished up as a minister at the end of last year, in December. Former ministers do not get to make a valedictory speech or anything of that nature. Of course, I am not leaving; I will remain in the Parliament, contest the next election and do all those sorts of good things. However, I wanted to mention some of my ministerial staff who did an absolutely outstanding job for the six years that I was a minister.

I had three chiefs of staff during that time. Naomi Arrowsmith, whom I did not know before she was offered to me as chief of staff, was outstanding. When we get someone suggested to us by the Premier's office as a chief of staff, we can be a bit unsure. Naomi is a professional public servant who had worked mainly in the natural resource management area, at the Environmental Protection Authority and the Department of Water, for a very long time. She was outstanding. One of the things we quickly determined was that we shared a lot of values, and that was really important for me and for her. She said that she would not work for a minister with whom she did not share values. I would go to events, especially in regional Western Australia, and she would know many more people than I would. People would come up to us, and I would think that someone had come to talk to me, but they had actually come to talk to Naomi because she had either worked with them, employed them or mentored them. She was just fantastic. This is the regard that I hold her in: when I found out that Peter Watson was finishing up as the member for Albany and we were searching for a candidate for Albany, I said to her that she should step up and think about doing it, because I thought that she would be really good. Naomi is from Albany. Of course, the current member for Albany is outstanding; Rebecca Stephens does a fantastic job. I had never met Rebecca before she nominated, and she is doing a great job, but had Naomi said yes, I would have been really happy to support her. Naomi said that there was no way she would do that stupid stuff. She said she could not do the baby kissing or whatever. She is too serious about her work. She had also given a commitment to her partner that at the end of the first term of the McGowan government, she would take long service leave and sail a boat around Indonesia, which they are currently doing. I hold her in such high regard that I thought she would have made a great addition to this place as Peter Watson's successor as the member for Albany. Our best laid plans do not always come off.

Naomi was replaced by Luke Clarke, who had been a policy officer with me, and he fulfilled the job of chief of staff. He was absolutely brilliant until he was poached by the Premier's office, where he currently is. I employed Luke when I was at the union. Luke applied for a job. At the time, he was working as an air-quality analyst for, I think, Alcoa or he might have been working for a contractor. He was doing that sort of work, and part of his job was climbing up smokestacks in summer and taking air quality samples. When I asked him why he wanted to come and work at the union, he said that it would be better than climbing up a smokestack. Luke was great. I knew him at the union. Again, we had shared values. He was absolutely brilliant. He had a chemistry qualification, so when I was Minister for Science and had to rely on my high school science to get me through, I had Luke with a chemistry degree and Naomi, who also had a chemistry degree. They got me through a lot of things. Luke was brilliant. I was pleased to have him in my office for that time. It was no surprise when the Premier's office eventually poached him. Finally, in the last couple of months, I had Emma Collyer as my chief of staff. Emma Collyer is known to a lot of people in the Labor Party. She has been around for a long time. I knew of her, but I had never worked closely with her. She came in as a policy officer and stepped into the chief of staff role when Luke Clarke took some parental leave around the time of the birth of one of his children. Emma was brilliant. She seamlessly stepped up into that chief of staff role, and when Luke was poached by the Premier's office, Emma Collyer again stepped up as my chief of staff. As I said, I had never really worked closely with her, but she was brilliant. At the time, the office was dealing with things like the closure of native forests and the like—there was a bit going on—but Emma fulfilled all the requirements of the role and more. I just wanted to thank her, Luke and Naomi for the leadership they provided in my office.

I will quickly mention some of my other staff. Alysha Andersen was my first media officer when I was Minister for Fisheries, and she dealt with the drama of every fatal shark attack. She was absolutely brilliant. Steed Farrell was the media officer when I finished as minister. Again, he is very experienced and very loyal. I thank him very

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much for his work. Emily Knowles is a great young Labor woman. She was originally my youth policy adviser, but became my water policy adviser during my last year in office. Again, she was brilliant. The only time I think I offended her was when I once described her as being quiet. Yes, that tells everyone that I did not really know her when she first started in my office. She is an absolutely brilliant woman with great Labor values. Donna Plummer came to my office in the last year of me being a minister and took on forestry. Donna Plummer was everything you could ask for in a ministerial staffer—absolutely brilliant. Dr Lucy Peters, who came to me as a placement from the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, had a legal degree and a PhD in city air quality. She is a very competent woman who came to me to help with the drafting of the new water legislation that the Premier has mentioned is on the agenda for this year. I thank Lucy very much. Trish Pedelty was also a placement from the department of water. Most placements last only six months, maybe a year, but Trish was there for more than five years in the end because she really loved the work and I loved having her in the office. She was an incredibly valuable member of the team. Some people may know of Mark Chmielewski who is a public servant. He worked in the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and was my policy officer for fisheries. He is a great bloke and there is nothing he does not know about his policy area across a whole bunch of stuff in regional WA. He is absolutely brilliant. Amy Cowdell was on placement from the department of water. She was one of my water policy advisers as well. Again, she was a great water professional who really gave her time in my office 110 per cent. I wish Amy well. Natalie Duthie came to me last year—another good Labor woman—and took over the youth policy role when Emily Knowles moved into Water. She is a brilliant young woman. I am glad to see that she is still working in a ministerial office.

I had some cracker administration staff working in my office. My executive officer Anita was brilliant. She will not mind me saying that she worked for a number of ministers across a number of governments. She is absolutely committed to her work. The worst and the best thing about Anita is that we could not get her to tell us any stories about the other ministers for whom she had worked. She absolutely kept them in the vault. Anita was fantastic. Amelia was my diary person last year and has just had a baby. I want to wish her well. She was also brilliant and committed. Although she was having a baby, and I know I was not her number one priority, she nevertheless gave what the job needed. Alison and Anthea who work at the front of the office—I see them when I come in in the morning—are, again, very committed to the work that they do and I thank them very much. I want to mention Matt, a young guy with autism who I employ for eight hours a week in my office. It is a really good thing to do. If other offices are thinking of doing something useful in this area, I would encourage them to do it, and I would encourage businesses to do it. One might wonder what use is it to employ someone for eight hours a week. To Matt and his family that eight hours was just great for him. He said that having a job was one of his goals in life. The fact that he came into our office to work for eight hours a week meant that he could tick that box. When people asked him what he did, he could say that he worked for the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and a minister. It was all part of building his self-esteem. It cost the state government almost nothing, but for Matt it was just great. It was also important to his family that Matt had that opportunity. It was really good to have Matt in the office. He was the second guy with autism that I employed in my office for very little public expense during my time as a minister, but it delivered so much to both those guys. I really recommend that we do it more in not only government, but also the private sector.

Lastly, I want to mention Kelly Ovens and Sarah Reynolds who are my electorate officers. When an EO's member of Parliament is a minister, so much more work falls back onto them. I want to thank them for the work that they did while I was a minister. They are a bit sick of me because they see a bit more of me now that I am no longer a minister, so we have had to negotiate that, but I thank Kelly and Sarah very much for the work that they do.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr D.J. KELLY: I quickly want to thank the agencies that I was responsible for as minister. The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation sits inside the water portfolio. The brilliant professionals there perform such an incredible function, as they would in any jurisdiction, but in a state like Western Australia that is so impacted by climate change, we are very lucky to have a well-resourced professional regulator on the job like the department. I thank Michelle Andrews and her team for the work that they do. I get sick of hearing people slag off the public sector. As a matter of faith, we often hear from the other side of politics that the private sector is terrible and we should privatise everything and that sort of stuff. We hear that often. The Leader of the Opposition has just looked up as if to say, "Not me." We often hear it from the Nationals WA and the Liberal Party. They run down the public sector. Departments like DWER do such a fantastic job. We have really committed professionals and the more support we can provide them the better.

We have three publicly owned water utilities in WA—the Water Corporation, Aquwest and Busselton Water. The Water Corporation is one of the most important institutions in WA. It was set up as a corporation in the 1990s by the Liberal Party, with the National Party's consent, because it wanted to set it up as a corporation and then privatise it. Thankfully, because of the opposition from Labor members on this side and the public, that never happened.

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The Water Corporation does an incredibly important job. It delivers a dividend of over \$1 billion back to the taxpayer. It has also helped us manage the changes that needed to be made because of climate change, such as the move to desalinating water because our dams are no longer filled by rain every year. Imagine if that had been run as a private corporation and the state had to negotiate with private shareholders in Singapore, Sydney, London or somewhere else. The Water Corporation is encouraging people to use less of its product. Imagine if the Liberal and National Parties had succeeded in their plans to privatise the Water Corporation. I thank Pat Donovan and the executive, and Ross Love, the chair, for the work they do. Gary Hallsworth is the CEO of Aqwest down Bunbury way and Stan Liaros is the chair. They do a great job. Chris Elliott is the CEO of Busselton Water and Robyn Paice is the chair. I thank them for the work they do. We are lucky to have them. We heard during the debate on energy prices that we were lucky that Western Australia did not allow the Liberal and National Parties to privatise Western Power and Synergy. The same applies to water—probably doubly so. It was a great pleasure to be responsible for those agencies as the minister.

Stuart West is the CEO of the Forest Products Commission and Debra Blaskett is the chair of the commission. Again, they do an absolutely great job. The government decided to bring the practice of native logging to an end by the end of 2024. That was difficult for some members of the FPC, but it has worked hard, particularly in assisting with the transition of the staff and the mills. We negotiated an agreement with the Australian Workers' Union that provided compensation. I will not say it was "generous compensation" because when people lose their employment, especially longstanding employment, almost nothing is generous. However, the redundancy package that we provided was reasonable in the circumstances. We heard the Leader of the Opposition today scoffing at the possibility that some workers in the timber industry could get a job in a lithium mine, for example, because they do not have the skills or the capacity to do that. Do not run down those workers, members on the other side. Do not underestimate them.

Mr P.J. Rundle: Don't close their industry down.

Mr D.J. KELLY: What would the member for Roe know about anything? Not much. He lost a two-person ballot for the leadership of the Nationals WA to the member for Moore. That says a lot about the member for Roe.

We worked hard with the Australian Workers' Union and came up with a package for those workers. The Forest Products Commission has done a great job. As I said, I really want to thank Stuart West and Deb Blaskett, the chair, for the great job they do.

A Department of Communities team assisted me with the youth portfolio. It is a small section within the Department of Communities, and I want to thank those people. I think we did some good work in my time as Minister for Youth. We provided funding to the Youth Pride Network, for example. That is a brilliant organisation that is taking on discrimination against young people by giving them their own voice. I really hope that organisation grows and is a feature of the landscape for a long time to come. In addition, we provided funding to TransFolk of WA for the same reasons. I want to thank Mike Rowe from the Department of Communities. Again, that has a very committed and dedicated group of public servants.

I also want to mention one other issue. I want to give a shout-out to a bunch of guys whom I have been supporting for the past three or four years. They were sexually abused, mainly at the hands of the Catholic Church, but not exclusively. I have been meeting with them on a regular basis every couple of months since—let me work it out—2020, I think. That came about because I discovered that the principal of the school that I went to, Christian Brothers College Fremantle, was in fact a paedophile. That came out in a story in *The West Australian*. I had just been elected to Parliament when I found that out. Since then, I made contacts and people came to me when I started talking about these issues. From 2020, basically, I have been meeting with a bunch of guys who are working through dealing with that issue. It is amazing. You think you know about this stuff but you find out that you do not. The guys are mainly from the Christian Brothers, but some guys had also been abused at Aquinas, Trinity, CBC Highgate, CBC Fremantle, CBC Leederville and St Pat's in Geraldton—the whole gamut. A lot of them have been going through the common-law processes. When the McGowan government was elected in 2017, we lifted the statute of limitations on common-law claims. That was a great thing. Some of those guys have chosen to go down that path, and that is really good.

Today I want to acknowledge a couple of them who helped organise what is called a Loud Fence event in the week of Cardinal Pell's funeral that was held in Australia. When the royal commission that Julia Gillard called heard evidence in Ballarat, one of the things that came out was the abuse that took place there. Some victims and their supporters began hanging ribbons on St Patrick's Cathedral or college, I think it was. I forget the name of the institution. They began tying ribbons as a sign of support for the victims. Hanging ribbons on those various institutions has become a bit of a thing for victims of child sexual abuse at the hands of the Catholic Church in particular. When George Pell passed, he had an incredible, I suppose, religious equivalent of a 12-gun salute event at the Vatican in Rome. He was then given an amazing send-off by the Catholic Church in Sydney. The Roman Catholic

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Archdiocese of Sydney's website talked about his funeral as if it was an upcoming concert event. I think it said that it was going to be the biggest event since the funeral of Archbishop Mannix—the most important event for the Catholic Church. There was no mention of George Pell's role in the cover-up of child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church, which was revealed by the royal commission. There was no sensitivity to those victims. It was really a celebration of Cardinal Pell's life. In response to the way that was handled, some of the guys I have been meeting with said they wanted to do the first Loud Fence event here in Western Australia. That resulted in probably 20 or 30 people showing up a couple of days before the funeral to tie hundreds of ribbons to St Mary's Cathedral in Victoria Square here in Perth. I think there will be more of that. It is just amazing how many people are touched by that issue. I want to give a shout-out to Jarrod Luscombe and some of the others who organised that. It takes guts to organise that sort of stuff. The Catholic Church has a history of not responding well. I just hope the Catholic Church has an opportunity, while dealing with that group of men, to turn over a new leaf. Part of it is how the church handles the litigation that it is now experiencing. As I said in an opinion piece in *The West* over Christmas, from talking to some of the lawyers that are dealing with those common-law claims, it appears that to deal with those claims the Catholic Church is now using the same tactics that the asbestos industry uses: it is dragging them out. It is making them difficult. It is really making it difficult for those complainants. I just hope the Catholic Church turns over a new leaf in dealing with those claims.

I had hoped to talk to a bunch of the items that the Premier raised as our agenda for 2023. There is some really brilliant stuff, such as abortion law reform and rewriting the Equal Opportunity Act. There is some amazing stuff but, Deputy Speaker, I am going to run out of time. I look forward to this year being another great year for this government and I look forward to continuing as the member for Bassendean for some considerable time to come.

MS M. BEARD (North West Central) [3.41 pm]: I rise to speak to the house as the newest member in the chamber, as everyone knows. From a regional perspective, I want to speak about many of the challenges faced by the regions. One such issue is the retention of populations in regional areas across the state. Many deficits and shortfalls across the regions are now having a direct impact on a lot of regional towns. It is a broad spectrum of issues, including infrastructure requirements for health, general staff shortages and difficulty in doing business. I acknowledge that we have had COVID as well. As populations reduce in a lot of these towns, communities are being impacted. The regions are a major contributor to the state economy through mining and agriculture, but I think it is enormously important that we support tourism to ensure continuity of income. We cannot rely on mining forever and we need to diversify into tourism as much as we can. We have so much to offer in the north west and I think everyone knows that. To support tourism, there is a need to support continual ongoing infrastructure and recognise the deficits.

I have said before that people in the bush do not expect underground railways or massive stadiums, but they do expect the basic services and facilities that ensure that the livability of their town is sound. Perth is a long way from the north and the further we get from Perth, the less reliable a lot of services are. The further we get from a regional centre, the same thing applies. It is a mantra that I have been on about for the past few weeks and it is something that I have noticed. I have been in the regions when we had regional managers in service centres and I have been in the regions as they have been pulled away from the service centres. There is a remarkable correlation between what is happening on the ground and the fact that, in a lot of cases, the regional decision-makers are not in the town. I constantly get constituents coming to me complaining that they have an issue to deal with. They go to the office in town and they are referred to Perth. There is a disconnection in many cases because the regional senior executive manager is not in the Gascoyne region. This comes back to the fact that the midwest–Gascoyne is a really large geographical space. Geraldton is a 500-kilometre drive from Perth, and Exmouth is another 400 kilometres, so it is 900 kilometres away from Perth. If someone in Exmouth is talking to someone in Perth, it is like they are speaking to someone in another state, as though we were on the other side of Australia.

Housing is clearly an issue. We all understand that a shortage of housing across the regions is a problem that everyone faces. The lack of workers' accommodation in the regions has been particularly prevalent for places such as Coral Bay, Exmouth and Kalbarri, which are in my electorate, and that has a knock-on effect. It is difficult to employ people. We cannot get staff, and when we can get staff, we have nowhere for them to be housed. I think it is really tricky for people to grow their businesses if there is no workers' accommodation. It has been a slow process, but we really need to focus on this issue if we are going to take that next leap that I was speaking about of growing tourism so that tourism can be sustainable in the area and support those small businesses up and down the coast and inland.

Another issue in housing concerns women's refuges across the regions. I think many places do not have facilities for men who become displaced. I think that needs to be looked at, as does transitional housing for people coming out of refuges. The women's refuge I am thinking of has women there for three months. After that, they often return to the same environment they came from and there is no kind of transitional space for them to move into as they move away from the safety of that refuge.

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I spoke before about general staff shortages. Staff in businesses and the hospitals are battling burnout across the board. We are finding that if people think it is difficult to live in the regions, they are migrating south to the larger centres; it is a lot easier for someone suffering burnout to live somewhere with facilities, services and things that make life a lot easier.

I referred to infrastructure and services in the regions. Health infrastructure for the regions springs to mind. Meekatharra Hospital is still as it was years ago. I understand the plans are being drawn up. The Tom Price Hospital upgrade has stalled and there is no clarity around when that project might be delivered. The hospital that is causing concern for residents at the moment is Paraburdoo Hospital. It is in a dismal state of repair and is in urgent need of attention. I am not sure whether people realise, but if they are injured in Tom Price, they will be transported 80 kilometres to Paraburdoo because there is no facility for the Royal Flying Doctor Service to land at Tom Price. Patients have to be filtered through Paraburdoo Hospital. For people who want to see a doctor in Paraburdoo, I understand now—after speaking with people this week—that the GP in Paraburdoo is no longer there because the block in which they were housed has come into such disrepair that it has been closed down. It seems that the GP is now in Tom Price and servicing residents who have to travel 80 kilometres each way to see a doctor. That is a concern to the community of Paraburdoo. Given that there are also enormous amounts of activity in that region, and another camp with 1 600 people is about to take off, we need to see some progress on Paraburdoo Hospital one way or another.

Aged-care facilities and Silver Chain services continue to be an issue in regional areas. We need to enable people to stay in their towns and stay in their homes and stay with their families on country. The Carnarvon aged-care facility is already full and has a waiting list. I think it could be filled twice over. It is not a reason to stop once we have things, because the demand is there. Coupled with that is the maternity services in the regions. People right up north have been contacting me saying that maternity services are not a luxury. I think that having a baby is a special time for anyone, but having to travel and be away for five or six weeks not only incurs a cost but also means there is no family support. For someone who already has a family with three or four children, it is stressful to have to come to Perth. People not being able to access maternity services in the regions is a massive issue and it is extremely costly for them to travel. Constant upgrades are needed for nursing posts across the regions, particularly inland at Mt Magnet and Yalgoo, where people rely on them. As the mining industry progresses out there, there will be more demand on the nursing posts in Yalgoo, Cue and Mt Magnet. Shark Bay has around 700 residents, but it can swell to 7 000 and sometimes there is no doctor there. It is the same in Coral Bay. It has a nursing post but it is very limited. The ambulance and other services that are needed are volunteer based. There can be 3 000 to 5 000 people in that location as well. I am not sure whether the Royal Flying Doctor Service can still land at the Coral Bay airstrip. I think patients have to be transported to Exmouth or Learmonth. It is a concern.

One thing that is really important to me, as it is to a lot of women, is access to breast screening and help for women in regional areas with breast cancer. It definitely has a profile, but we need to work more closely with the women in the regions who are impacted. It is a tricky time for everyone.

Renal dialysis is another thing that everyone is acutely aware of. People who are living in Perth now are waiting for someone to vacate the chair in their town so that they can return to their families and receive the care that they need, some of them for the rest of their lives. Renal dialysis is very important to me.

A lack of specialist services such as anaesthetists is a large part of the reason that maternity wards are struggling. There is the tyranny of distance and people in the regions have to make arduous trips. We have been really lucky not to have had more fatalities. Some of the hospitals struggle at times. I want to acknowledge the health workers across the state, but particularly those in the regions; they are an amazing group of people. We have one paramedic in the region—Kyle. He is incredible. If it were not for Kyle, more people would have lost their lives on numerous occasions. I would like to say thank you to Kyle and to the staff at the nursing posts in regional areas. It is extremely challenging for them. They work long hours. They are often called in during the night because they are the only ones on call. I think they get overlooked because they are always there. That service is not always there; it is just that they are special people.

Education is another topic that we touched on yesterday. I see it as the main catalyst to drive change in communities across the state. I do not think that any of the issues that are happening in the regions at the moment are not happening in Perth. Anyone who gets off the bus in town in the morning and walks through Forrest Chase will see that it is exactly the same as it is in many of the regions across the state. Education and training and getting people back into employment is really important. I have raised this before, but it was disappointing to see that the Exmouth and Carnarvon TAFE campuses were excluded from the funding provided for lecturers. I am unsure of the reason for that. Free courses are now being offered. I know that two lecturers took voluntary severances last year. The future

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of those campuses needs to be questioned. Will they still exist? I really hope they do. I hope they do not disappear because I think they are really important.

The cost of living and the cost of freight, particularly in the regions, is something that people have had to live with. In more recent times, it has been exacerbated. A recent media report showed that 38 per cent of Western Australians were having trouble paying their mortgage compared with the national average of 33 per cent. It is felt more acutely in the regions. Fuel is more expensive. I think I paid \$2.85 a litre in Tom Price not so long ago. It is an enormous cost difference for people and families living in those regions who are travelling around, but it is felt more acutely by pensioners and seniors in the regions. I have met a lot of them in the electorate and they are finding it really hard to make ends meet, particularly when it comes to health. The increase in the patient assisted travel scheme payment has not kept up with the increase in the cost of living. A constituent of mine had to travel to Perth for health reasons. He needed his own bathroom. The best he could get was a backpacker's room for \$100 a night. He really struggled because he is elderly. Everything is harder. He struggled to get on the plane by himself. He was not able to take a carer. He had to find his way off the plane and get into a taxi with his luggage. He is quite frail. These are some of the challenges that seniors in the regions are facing at the moment. The fuel levy is another issue. Fuel prices have significantly increased and I think the older demographic who rely on their pensions are finding it tricky.

It has been a long journey for the people of Kalbarri since cyclone Seroja. Many of them are still struggling. I know that a lot of businesses in Kalbarri have closed. I think someone quoted that 16 businesses have closed during that time. Some people still have a tarp on the roof of their house. The people on the ground and the volunteers have done an incredible job. We need to make sure that we progress this recovery project for Kalbarri. There is still a lot of work to do. We need to get some of the infrastructure back in place as soon as we can. The same applies to the Kimberley. I hope it does not take the same length of time there as it has taken in Kalbarri after cyclone Seroja.

I think the Leader of the Opposition mentioned the impact of the floods on tourism in WA. It is a big concern for the people I speak to in the north. They are concerned at the length of time it is taking to free up the east-west access through Fitzroy. A lot of people who travel down along the coast, including those who travel all the way to Esperance, come along that pathway. If that is delayed through the high season, and with the current price of fuel, I do not think people will double back. There is concern about that amongst operators well below the Kimberley area. I know that some have already had cancellations because of that. This could be a tricky time for those businesses that have already been through an arduous time in the last year. They have had no staff and are operating at below capacity in many cases.

People are really looking forward to the solar eclipse. I hope that the towns that have very small cohorts and limited resources get through that unscathed. One of the issues for a lot of people is road safety. People are also worried about whether the health service will stack up. Hopefully, we can cater for this event. After the event, obviously there will need to be a clean-up. The impact on the environment has also been raised constantly with me.

I think someone touched on mental health today. Mental health issues really are prevalent across all industries. It is tricky. A lot of people with mental health issues do not know they have mental health issues. Suicide is another major issue.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms M. BEARD: Linking back to tourism and the Kimberley, one of the big infrastructure projects that is causing grief is the sealing of the Goldfields Highway, or the Wiluna–Meeka road as they call it. Last month, there were three or four accidents, with a couple of truck rollovers. A lot of traffic is now using that road as an alternative because access in the north is blocked. The Kimberley floods have highlighted even more the need to seal that state highway in its entirety as soon as we can. With the wealth in our state, that road needs to be prioritised, as there is mining activity and other traffic on the road now. I urge the government to try to get that on the table as quickly as it can.

The last issue in the regions I will talk about is crime—across communities and across Australia. It is something that I think most people understand is incredibly complex to resolve; there is no white knight coming over the hill, but the situation has reached crisis point in many places. Newman is a classic case of a town that we hear about sporadically, but when we speak to people who come from Newman, we hear that they are actually in a really bad place. The same goes for Mt Magnet, Port Hedland and Halls Creek. I have spoken to people from all those places, and they are all having the same issues. A multifaceted approach is needed. There is also a shortage of foster carers in a lot of the regions, and there is a dire need for safe spaces to keep kids safe, because they are just not safe. We need to target a number of things in terms of getting kids back on track. Education and breaking the cycle of crime is really important. We have programs in place that will improve circumstances in five or 10 years, but we have a cohort of neglected and dysfunctional children who, one way or another, we need to save from becoming the next wave flowing through the justice system.

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Collaboration is needed in every space, and I think I said this yesterday. This issue has been kicking around for generations and has clearly now become worse and systemic. There is no accountability and there are no consequences at the moment, so the behaviours of some youth are being normalised. It is quite normal for a pack of 10 or 12 kids to go into a chemist and try on the shoes and shirts and walk out with them; it has become almost a game. We need to break those behavioural cycles and we need to find a way to make people accountable. It will take a number of different strategies; we have spoken about a lot of them.

Amendment to Question

Ms M. BEARD: On that note, I move —

That the following words be added after “noted” —

and that this house recognises the abject failure of the McGowan government to acknowledge, let alone address, the worsening and deeply troubling crime issue across our state, and its “out of sight, out of mind” approach to crime in regional Western Australia

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [4.02 pm]: I rise to speak to this excellent amendment put by the member for North West Central —

... that this house recognises the abject failure of the McGowan government to acknowledge, let alone address, the worsening and deeply troubling crime issue across our state, and its “out of sight, out of mind” approach to crime in regional Western Australia

We know that an out of sight, out of mind approach has certainly been taken in the member’s home town of Carnarvon. She has called on the Premier to visit the town, but no visit has taken place, so it is very much out of sight, out of mind for the Premier in respect of crime in Carnarvon. This is despite the fact that both the current and previous members for North West Central have advocated for action to take place in that town to address its burgeoning crime situation, in common with many communities across regional Western Australia.

We read news reports daily about police cars being hunted down and rammed by out-of-control young people in many towns in the north, and we also hear about violent assaults and children on the streets at all hours of the night. There is nowhere for those children to go. There are also families whose dysfunction means that the children are not safe in their own homes, so they wander the streets late at night because they cannot find anywhere safe to stay. The police are at a loss to know what to do with the children in those communities, but we continue to hear the government denying that there are any problems in this space.

I have often heard government members refer to a program called Target 120, which is said to be helping to address the situation of at-risk young people in regional Western Australia. I asked question on notice 649 about Target 120, which was turned in on 1 December 2022. I asked how many families were involved and where they were located, and I note in the answer that no families were listed in the member for North West Central’s electorate, despite it being the geographically largest electorate in the state and the fact that it takes in many, many communities where there are issues. I do not see any Target 120 activity listed for Carnarvon, despite it having been raised as an issue over many months by both the member and her predecessor. Programs are being run in Bunbury, Kalgoorlie and, thankfully, in Broome, but not in the community of Carnarvon, where this has been consistently raised by the member as an issue that needs to be dealt with.

We know that regional areas fare very poorly under the current regime in terms of outcomes of crime. The Premier claimed today that there had been a reduction in crime and therefore there was no issue. I would say two things about that. Firstly, it has got to the point in some communities that certain levels of crime are so common the police are actually not encouraging people to report crimes anymore because it will simply overwhelm the police, who cannot take on any more work. It has to be a very serious crime to actually now get reported in certain communities. Has there been a reduction in reporting due to the lack of capacity for the police to act?

I also point out that although the Premier might have been talking about a state average or a statewide number, there is a huge disparity between regional figures and metropolitan figures. I have a list of crime rates from the Western Australia Police Force incident management system that compares incidents in the regions with those in the metropolitan area, based on the monthly crime rate per 100 000 people for the first half of 2022–23. I will run through some of those statistics, because the disparity is shocking.

For homicide, the figure is 0.9 reports for every 100 000 people in the metropolitan area, on a monthly basis, compared with 4.8 in the regions. In other words, homicide is five times more likely in the regions than in Perth. That should surely ring alarm bells for anyone. For recent sexual offences, the figure is 73.6 reports in the metropolitan area and 148 in the country, so twice as many. For family assaults, there were 350.7 in the metro area and 1 201 in the country. That means more than one person in 100 is involved in a family assault. For non-family assaults, it was

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238 compared with 469. For threatening behaviour, there were 57 for metro and 238 in the regions. For non-family threatening behaviour, there were 65.3 reports in the metropolitan area and 136 in the country. For burglaries, there were 331 in the metropolitan area and 672 in the regions—twice as many. For stealing of a motor vehicle, there were 101 compared with 192. For property damage, there were 425 compared with 919; arson, 11 compared with 40; drug offences, 349 compared with 628; and for breaches of violence restraining orders, it was 174 compared with 492. Those are huge disparities between the metropolitan area and the regions, so it is no wonder that regional people are feeling under siege. I can tell members that in some of the towns I represent the figures would be nothing like that; we are talking about certain communities where this is way out of control, but we have had nothing but denial and a lack of action from this government.

In fact, government members have catcalled both the previous and the current members for North West Central for supposedly running their community down when they are actually responding to an urgent and dire need in their community that needs to be addressed by the government, instead of the government trying to shame or belittle whoever is sitting in the chair representing the electorate of North West Central. We have seen that consistently in this Parliament, and I believe we saw it again today. I thought some of the comments being made were deliberately aimed at trying to belittle the member instead of addressing, in a serious manner, the very serious situation that is occurring in not just her town, but also Halls Creek. By all sorts of statistics, Halls Creek is out of control. Halls Creek has been known to be a problem for many months. We have been talking about the situation in that town for a long time now, virtually the entirety of this government, yet very little is being done. Extra police have been involved and sent up there in some sort of strike force. They are not in the community, they do not understand the community and they really do not want to be there. They have been sent up there because the situation is out of control due to there being no presence of services in those communities before these incidents began. When these people were younger, they could have been helped to prevent crime getting out of control in the communities.

We know what is happening in the justice system generally. We have seen the dysfunction in Banksia Hill Detention Centre. We have seen the inability of this government to recognise that it has a problem, and that what it is doing is just increasing the issue. It is just churning out people who are more likely to end up in the justice system for many years to come instead of rejuvenating and turning these people around and getting them into normality and a life outside the justice system where they can have constructive and happy lives, not destructive lives in institutions for many years to come.

This is an urgent need. The member for North West Central has highlighted this need. I believe the government should listen to the member instead of trying to belittle and discredit the member, and say that she is running down her community. She is not running down her community; she is representing her community. I expect the government to actually listen. I expect the government to act and I expect it to do everything it can to ensure that those shocking statistics that I have just read out turn around and some sense of normality and equality of expectation is met so that regional people feel safe in their homes and communities, young people in regional areas are not being led down the garden path into lives of crime and institutionalisation, and they have strong healthy families with an education and a future. That is all she is asking for. That is what we are asking for.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [4.12 pm]: I rise to support this worthy amendment —

... that this house recognises the abject failure of the McGowan government to acknowledge, let alone address, the worsening and deeply troubling crime issue across our state, and its “out of sight, out of mind” approach to crime in regional Western Australia.

I will refer to and touch on question time today as a starting point. The out of sight, out of mind approach was very much seen front and centre today during question time when the Premier was asked a range of questions about this important issue. As the Leader of the Opposition stated, this government has a selective approach when it comes to crime in our community, and not just in the regions. There has been an emphasis on regional Western Australia, but it is right across the state as well. In the latest crime statistics, there has been a 13.9 per cent increase in offences against persons—that is, violent crime. That is a 34.9 per cent increase from the five-year average. That is crime across the board in this state. Although the Premier talked in very selective figures about crime going down—those relating to drug offences, perhaps because of the border closure, and against property, and we know that technology has enabled that to happen—what is very much concerning Western Australians in particular in the regions, and out in the suburbs of Perth, is the escalation of antisocial behaviour and violent crime. This government should take that very seriously; it should not be something that the government tries to spin. It should put in place every effort to ensure that it is illustrating that it cares about this issue.

If we look at the five-year change in further statistics, such as sexual offences, we will see there has been an eight per cent increase; for assault, a 29 per cent increase; and for threatening behaviour to family members, a 47 per cent increase. That is right across the board. There is no way of spinning that. It is very clear that the

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McGowan government is ignoring a very serious issue right across this state, particularly in regional areas. It is extraordinary to hear the spin from this government about these concerns, particularly about incidents of youth crime in regional communities, because we are seeing that people are not feeling safe in their homes and in their communities. The Premier's approach is to encourage parents and say that parents need to be parents. That falls well short of addressing the real fear that community members feel about these incidents that have got out of control.

The WA Police Union has its own statistics as well. It has a measure that is the crime severity score, which reflects the relative harm of offences, rather than counting the raw number of felonies. According to its statistics released last year, it highlighted that over a 10-year period, offences had increased by 22 per cent across regional WA in a decade and had climbed 15 per cent in Perth as well. Over the past 10 years, seven offence categories have had significant increases. Abduction and harassment is up 68 per cent, sexual offences are up 61 per cent, fraud and deception is up 58 per cent, offences against justice are up 49 per cent, illicit drugs are up 48 per cent, and weapons and explosives are up 17.6 per cent. The big increases should be of no surprise, with the Pilbara experiencing a 31 per cent overall increase over that 10-year period, the goldfields-Esperance a 35.5 per cent increase, the midwest-Gascoyne a 45 per cent increase, and the Kimberley an extraordinary 96 per cent increase in offences. That certainly highlights the points raised by the member for North West Central, which were also well articulated by the Leader of the Opposition, about the significant increase of severity of crime outside the metropolitan area. That is something that this government is clearly not focused on.

The alliance takes very seriously assaults on police officers. The rate of assaults on WA officers increased in nine of the Western Australia Police Force's 15 districts, with eight of them experiencing increases of greater than 20 per cent—58.8 per cent in the wheatbelt, 55.7 per cent in the midwest-Gascoyne, 44.6 per cent in the great southern and 22.2 per cent in the Kimberley. Other increases occurred in the metropolitan area, with an increase of 38 per cent in Cannington, for example. Western Australian police are leaving in droves. The number of police officers who left the force over the past 12-month reportable period was more than double the previous year.

WA police officers do not feel that this government has their back. A range of examples highlight that. The police union today called on the government to better support it. WA police are asking to be better supported when they are out in their vehicles. There was a call today for better training and equipment so that police can do their job safely and support a safer community. The threat of criminal action and the loss of employment should not be a worry for police who are simply going about their everyday duty. This is the feedback from not only the police union, but also the community, particularly in regional areas but across Western Australia. The opposition supports the call from the union that the adoption of dash cams would lead to better road safety. That policy was presented as a trial in the 2017 election campaign. Other states, including New South Wales and Tasmania, use dash cams. The opposition has presented this policy in the past. We support any measure that will better equip WA police as they go about their job. The approach of the Minister for Police and the McGowan government of using selective figures, brushing away concerns, providing spin and calling out these very real concerns as simply operational matters falls well short of addressing the real concerns that our police officers share. The opposition believes that more needs to be done to ensure that more police do not leave the force. Over a 12-month period, 465 officers left the force. We need to ensure that our police are better supported.

We also need real answers when the government addresses these issues. I referred to Laverton in question time today. I asked a reasonable question of the Premier—that is, whether he supported the Albanese government's position of removing the cashless debit card and whether this government supported alternative solutions. We again got a bit of a non-answer from the government, effectively backing the Albanese government's removal of the cashless debit card without an alternative or any real solutions. We have heard from Pat Hill, the shire president of Laverton, who expressed real despair about this situation. I quote —

“When they pulled out the cashless card, they aren't thinking about the consequences on the ground—it's the last thing on their mind in Canberra where all they're thinking about is votes ...

“It hasn't fixed anything—it's made things worse. Now the politicians should be coming out here to see what's going on so they can fix it.”

Pat Hill also points to a big spike in antisocial behaviour, including violent public brawls and a range of other incidents. He has been public about the despair he feels about this issue. I had the opportunity to speak to Janice Scott, an elder from that community. She raised concerns about what she has seen on the ground in her community following the removal of the cashless debit card without any alternative solutions or restrictions. It was disappointing to hear the Premier brush off that decision as simply an election commitment of the Albanese government. This issue needs to be taken much more seriously, given the real concerns that Janice Scott and Pat Hill raised about the level of family and domestic violence and the violence that Janice has witnessed on the ground in the Laverton community. It is very distressing and it is disappointing that the Premier did not offer any clear solutions to this issue.

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I note the question by the member for North West Central about the announcement of \$250 million from the federal government for the Northern Territory to address social issues and crime. The opposition asked the Premier whether he would stand up for Western Australia and ensure that the federal government made a similar commitment to address these significant issues that are devastating communities in the north of the state and across regional WA. We again received a glib response from the government on this issue, pointing to the windfall it received from a previous federal government as an example of how it is representing the state. There is a new federal government representing Western Australia and the rest of the country—the Albanese government. It is the Albanese government that has provided \$250 million for the Northern Territory. Given the reports we are hearing across our state and in regions such as the North West Central electorate and more remote regions, including Laverton, it is only fair that Western Australians get a fair share of that funding commitment to address this very real issue. Given the feedback from Pat Hill and Janice Scott and people on the ground in the Laverton community about the level of abuse and family and domestic violence, it is only fair that this government at least acknowledges this issue and steps up for Western Australia. We need to see the Premier step up for Western Australia and back calls to address urgently this issue and provide solutions, particularly to the Laverton community that has now been left with this dire situation. The member for North West Central and the Leader of the Opposition have provided greater detail on the challenges facing other regional communities. I have also pointed to statistics on the serious levels of crime affecting other regional areas.

The government cannot wash its hands of this. This is a government that is meant to represent all of Western Australia, not just Perth. It is worth pointing out that these issues are quite prominent in the city as well. On Australia Day we saw riots in Yagan Square and brawls on the Rockingham foreshore, on Murray Street and in Northbridge. It is quite clear that the government does not have control of this issue. What is even more concerning is that it seems that the government is also not taking this issue seriously. It brushes off concerns as the federal government's problem and does not step up for Western Australia. It is not aware of the issues that are happening in communities outside of Perth. This has led to a situation in which many communities are living in fear and experiencing significant concerns about youth from a child protection perspective.

In many respects I agree with the Premier's comments about parents. Of course parents need to step up and be parents. However, when there is a severe level of neglect, people are not feeling safe in their homes and communities, and there is heavy federal government investment in one state, we also expect the Premier to not only provide some decisive leadership and stand up for Western Australia and these vulnerable communities, but also back up our police force. We expect the Premier to back up police with the training and equipment that they require.

We have also called for urgent laws needed to protect police officers from police car ramming incidents. These laws have been introduced in other states and there is no reason why this government cannot do the same. As an opposition, we back WA police officers and regional communities, as well as the broader concerns of those who are increasingly not feeling safe in their homes across the state. It is only fair that the Premier and the McGowan government do the same.

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Environment) [4.32 pm]: The government will be opposing this amendment from the member for North West Central on the basis that it is simply not true. Once again, the opposition has resorted to extreme, overblown, false language to describe what is happening in Western Australia, so we will oppose this amendment. There was a line about things being out of sight and out of mind and the government ignoring issues. The member who put this amendment to the question was actually aware that I was in her town of Carnarvon on Thursday last week. She is no doubt aware that today she had a meeting with the Minister for Police about the issues in Carnarvon, and I am sure that she should be aware that the Premier will visit Carnarvon this week.

Ms L. Mettam: I am not aware of that.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: The member was certainly aware that I was with her in Carnarvon on Thursday. She is aware of her own conversation with the police minister.

Mr R.S. Love: Did you give notice that you were in Carnarvon? You used to get these little notices when ministers would go into your electorate. We don't get them anymore. We haven't got them for years.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Okay. The local member was certainly aware that I was in Carnarvon because she attended the event.

I just want to point out the government's response to the issues about crime that have been raised today. It has been thorough and actually resulted in changes and improvements. The state government has been very active in Carnarvon and other regions around the state. An extra family support unit through the Department of Communities was installed in Carnarvon. A Target 120 program has been introduced. It existed in other regions throughout the state —

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Several members interjected.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Will members let me speak? It has recently been introduced into Carnarvon. Police resources have been increased. I know that over the Christmas and new year period, thousands of dollars in grants were made available to engage young people in things like sport and other community activities.

I will go through some of the crime statistics that have been debated in this place this afternoon and I will just mention one out of Carnarvon specifically. Through police sources, we have been told that as a result of our initiatives over the new year in Carnarvon, the incidence of damage and burglary has actually decreased by as much as 25 per cent. That is a short-term win. I congratulate the Minister for Police and the police in that town for those initiatives, as well as the members of the Department of Communities and everyone involved in the activation of those activities for young people.

The Leader of the Liberal Party made a comment in this place just a moment ago that there had been a 34.9 per cent increase in crime over the past five years. Again, it is the opposition's habit to simply pluck figures out of the air with no basis or foundation. There has actually been a 3.4 per cent decrease in offences against people and property over the past five years. This is stated on the Western Australia Police Force website. That kind of deliberate misinformation and distortion is not helpful for productive debate in this place. If members opposite want to question it and throw around figures like that, they are questioning the validity of what the Western Australia Police Force itself says. Again, the WA Liberal leader is deliberately misleading the Parliament.

Withdrawal of Remark

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms R.S. Stephens): Excuse me, minister, can you please retract the last comment that you just made.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: What I will say is that the comments by the Liberal leader —

The ACTING SPEAKER: Sorry, minister, can you withdraw those comments that you made.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: I withdraw, Madam Acting Speaker.

Debate Resumed

Mr R.R. WHITBY: I make the point that the comments made by the Liberal Party are not correct and do not align with what the Western Australia Police Force has stated publicly.

The claim was made by the Leader of the Liberal Party that the Premier in question time used selective statistics about drug offences. She claimed that maybe the statistics showed the impact of border closures. Again, this is incorrect. The Premier's statistics were for 2022 when the border was open for the vast majority of the year. I will go through those figures again from 2022 when the border closures ended and the border was open for the vast majority of the year. The number of burglaries went down by 40 per cent, the number of car theft and stealing offences went down by 25 per cent, property damage went down by 24 per cent and drug offences went down by 42 per cent.

Another comment made by the Leader of the Liberal Party was that crimes against property have actually decreased because of technology. Again, this is incorrect. The number of crimes against property have decreased significantly under the McGowan government because of our investment into the Western Australia Police Force. We have committed to recruiting 950 additional police officers over the rate of attrition. So far, 748 of those 950 officers have been recruited.

The crime figures in Carnarvon are interesting. There are issues in Carnarvon and the member for North West Central has pointed them out, as has the Leader of the Opposition. Core to these issues is the problem of alcohol abuse.

I want to go to the local community of Carnarvon and point to the Shire of Carnarvon's *Youth strategy plan 2022–2025*. Page 18 states —

... a range of issues faced by both youth and the community, including the negative profile of Carnarvon youth that is portrayed within the community and media forums; alcohol, drugs ...

At page 31, it states —

... our research highlighted causal factors that contribute to youth entering the Justice System. A number of these factors were identified in our consultation, having relevance in the Carnarvon community. The significant factors being:

- The use of alcohol and drugs
- The link between alcohol and domestic violence, and property crime ...

Again, it is about the impact of alcohol in that community.

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Page 11 states that the Shire of Carnarvon and the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries should —

Support and promote government initiatives on positive health and wellbeing that include:

- drug and alcohol awareness

The Shire of Carnarvon's *Intensive family & community intervention 2022–2023* report states that the safety and wellbeing of at-risk youth —

is frequently compromised on a daily basis; and there are also grave concerns of predatory exploitation as at-risk youth being exposed to alcohol and substance misuse.

We have a community that is facing issues. Last Thursday, I went to Carnarvon and to the liquor accord meeting. This is a new liquor accord that was formed —

Ms M. Beard interjected.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: — at the encouragement of the DLGSC. I congratulated the forum members that they had come together. It consisted of local licensees, members of the police and health workers as well as the council chaired by Councillor Eddie Smith. I said that I was there to listen. I said that I wanted to know the issues in Carnarvon, how they are related to alcohol abuse and how we could work together for these problems to be solved.

I think the member for North West Central is a member of the liquor accord—no? She was certainly in the room at the time, I guess as an observer.

Ms M. Beard: I'm a local member; the local member has always gone to it.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Okay. She was in the room at the time. I asked the people in that room directly: "What are the issues? How is liquor impacting this community? How can we work together to solve this problem?" Not one voice was raised—crickets. The shire president, Eddie Smith, shook his head because he knows that these issues and complaints are being raised all the time about action that is needed but not one member at that time when I asked the question wanted to stand up and say what could be an initiative of the liquor accord. I might also add that the liquor accord has recently come up with a modest set of initiatives that involve things like not displaying beverages with a high alcohol content, but still making them available, as well as restricting the passage of taxis through drive-through bottle shops. These are mild initiatives. I understand that they were put up at a previous liquor accord. At the liquor accord I attended, there was debate about whether they should go ahead with those measures. The liquor accord seems to be having some trouble in Carnarvon in progressing initiatives to make positive changes on the ground.

Dr D.J. Honey: If you reckon that's a solution, then we know we've got problems.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Cottesloe!

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Member for Cottesloe, if I can just continue, because this is important. The government works very hard in many ways to implement support on the ground. There are police. There are communities. There is a range of support and it is having an impact but communities need to take responsibility. Communities need to step up. In the same way that parents need to have responsibility for their children, communities need to have a role in this. Governments can never do it on their own. Governments have a very important role but we rely on communities and community members to get active and involved. The liquor accord is a way for the community to come together and put real change on the table to address issues at the local level. Liquor accords are best placed to do this because they are closest to the problems, they know the issues and the way the town will respond and can put forward those issues. Unfortunately, we are not seeing effective changes being suggested at the moment by this liquor accord.

It was mentioned by members opposite that Halls Creek has problems, and indeed many areas of Western Australia do. In Halls Creek, there are tough liquor restrictions. Certain categories of high alcohol liquor cannot be sold and there are restrictions on quantities. Those restrictions have been imposed on communities by the director of Liquor Licensing. The choice is very clear for the community in Carnarvon. It needs to step up. It needs to come up with its own solutions because the option beyond that is the director of Liquor Licensing responding in a way that imposes restrictions that are not the result of local consultation or a collective approach by the liquor accord. They are imposed on the community after a process. My preference is for communities to use the liquor accords —

Ms M. Beard: Is that with the cashless card?

Mr R.R. WHITBY: The member is talking about a federal issue. I am talking about how we need to play a role together as a community. I would suggest that the liquor accord in Carnarvon gets serious and plays an active and positive role. It is a way of making changes in the community. When the option and the ability to make changes is available, I urge them to take it. This is an opportunity for members of that liquor accord, who include a range of

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licensees in town. The member for North West Central knows very well that there are issues on a very close basis because of her involvement in the industry. There needs to be responsibility across the board. The police are doing what they can. The council is doing what it can. Local health workers are doing what they can. The community is crying out for action yet the liquor accord, which is in a wonderful position to make change based on local knowledge, is not doing it. Even the very light-touch initiatives that were suggested at a previous liquor accord meeting are now being debated and questioned by certain members of that liquor accord. It is not all of them, but certain members of that liquor accord—I think the member knows who they are—are questioning whether even the most light-touch initiatives should be introduced. There is debate about process on the liquor accord. I understand that there are people who do not attend meetings and then come to meetings and complain about decisions of the accord. This government is prepared to give all the support through the agency for that liquor accord to operate and to be a sensible way of introducing meaningful changes on the ground.

When we talk about issues across the community involving crime, we know that overwhelmingly they involve alcohol and alcohol abuse. There are different approaches in different communities. Some communities in Western Australia are completely dry. People in communities write to me and request that alcohol be banned in their communities. That is an approach that often happens and is effective. The director of Liquor Licensing can impose a whole range of other options. In a community like Carnarvon, I think it is appropriate that the liquor accord works out its own course. We are giving that community the opportunity to play a role, to step up and to be responsible, like other members of the community need to be responsible and like families need to be responsible for their kids. Businesses need to be responsible for the way that they behave in the community. The member for North West Central has a very key role here. She has a very direct and key role here to step up, be involved and take responsibility. She is asking the government to do many things, and it is. The government will continue to do those things but we are asking communities, important liquor accord organisations and licensees that can play a very direct and important role to step up. We are asking the member to step up and play that role. That is the challenge for the member for North West Central and other members opposite. They should step up and play a role in their communities. They should take a part in the process and be responsible for their communities, like we expect everyone else, such as parents, police and other community members, to be responsible. This is their opportunity. Rather than criticise and attack and use false information, such as that given by the Leader of the Liberal Party that I have detailed, to try to score political points in this place, I am asking members opposite to work together with the government, play a constructive role, step up with real and meaningful changes on that liquor accord, and let us see what we can do for the people of Carnarvon together.

Division

Amendment put and a division taken, the Acting Speaker (Ms R.S. Stephens) casting her vote with the noes, with the following result —

Ayes (6)

Ms M.J. Davies	Mr R.S. Love	Mr P.J. Rundle
Dr D.J. Honey	Ms L. Mettam	Ms M. Beard (<i>Teller</i>)

Noes (39)

Mr S.N. Aubrey	Ms J.L. Hanns	Mr K.J.J. Michel	Ms J.J. Shaw
Mr G. Baker	Mr T.J. Healy	Ms L.A. Munday	Ms R.S. Stephens
Ms L.L. Baker	Mr M. Hughes	Mrs L.M. O'Malley	Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski
Mr J.N. Carey	Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr P. Papalia	Dr K. Stratton
Ms C.M. Collins	Mr D.J. Kelly	Mr S.J. Price	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Mr R.H. Cook	Ms E.J. Kelsbie	Mr D.T. Punch	Ms C.M. Tonkin
Ms L. Dalton	Dr J. Krishnan	Mr J.R. Quigley	Mr R.R. Whitby
Ms D.G. D'Anna	Mr M. McGowan	Ms R. Saffioti	Ms S.E. Winton
Ms K.E. Giddens	Ms S.F. McGurk	Ms A. Sanderson	Ms C.M. Rowe (<i>Teller</i>)
Ms M.J. Hammat	Mr D.R. Michael	Mr D.A.E. Scaife	

Amendment thus negatived.

Consideration Resumed

MS E.J. KELSIE (Warren–Blackwood) [4.54 pm]: I rise today to support the Premier's Statement and update the chamber on just a few of the amazing things happening in my electorate, Warren–Blackwood. Before I start, I would like to wish some of my neighbours in Denmark, Mr Desmond Moore and Mrs Janet Moore, a happy sixty-fifth wedding anniversary. Here is to many more anniversaries to come.

In November, I was really lucky to host community cabinet, which gives ministers a chance to come down to Margaret River, Bridgetown, Manjimup and the local communities to talk to groups, individuals and volunteers

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about what is important to them. We kicked off in the town hall in Margaret River. It was a diverse crowd. We had representatives from schools, sports clubs, community organisations, tourism and business. They were able to ask ministers questions on a range of topics, from education and the environment—there were many questions on the environment—to tourism, health, and surf safety down at Main Break. I also hosted a community breakfast in Bridgetown. Thanks to Pip and her team from the Bridgetown Pottery–Restaurant. The breakfast was outstanding and the venue is absolutely divine. Volunteers and community representatives from across the electorate came along to dine and mingle with the cabinet. It was a great opportunity to thank them for the important work that they do to support our local communities and acknowledge the time and effort that they put in. I have had many, many comments and thankyou's for being able to have a one-on-one conversation with one of the ministers and get some great feedback, as well. Thank you so much for coming down.

We also hosted a community lunch in Manjimup. Thanks to Pauly and Deb from the Manjimup Gateway Hotel. We celebrated our region as the food bowl of the south west, bringing together agriculture, producers, tourism, hospitality, small business, innovation and events. Just so that members know, in food production, the Shire of Manjimup provides 67 per cent of our state's avocados, kiwifruit and processing potatoes, 61 per cent of our state's apples and 35 per cent of our state's seed potatoes. It is also a major truffle-producing area of the state. At the lunch, local business owners were able to hear from the Premier, meet the cabinet and network with other businesses. Again, I have had many thankyou's in person and by email thanking cabinet and the Premier for coming down and not just listening to the concerns of the community, but also helping to celebrate some of the amazing opportunities and successes of Warren–Blackwood. It really gave locals the opportunity to not only meet the Premier and cabinet ministers, but also discuss what is important in our region.

We have recently made some great funding announcements across Warren–Blackwood, supporting local community groups, schools, organisations and businesses that are helping to keep our community safe, active, vibrant and exciting. In the Shire of Augusta–Margaret River, we have just provided \$50 000 to the Augusta Community Development Association to hold the Taalinup (Augusta) Adventurethon, which is a multidiscipline, multi-sector, any-time race designed for participants of all ages and levels. I am someone who likes to take part in these adventure races and I used to go to Augusta quite regularly with friends and colleagues from Denmark Surf Life Saving Club to participate in the Anaconda adventure race. My leg of the adventure race is obviously the swim, but I have also done the paddle. Unfortunately, this left the community some years ago and is now run out of Dunsborough. It is outstanding to see the community pull together and come up with its own adventurethon to help bring tourism and get people active and connected within the community.

We also provided \$19 000 to the country music club towards the Boyup Brook Country Music Festival. It takes place this weekend. If members get the opportunity, I encourage them to pop down and take a look. The local community works really hard to make this festival an absolutely ripper event. It has been going for 35 years and I understand that it is an absolute favourite on the country music scene.

Moving to the Shire of Bridgetown–Greenbushes, we are also making important upgrades to local schools, with funding for solar panels provided to Bridgetown Primary School through the clean energy technology fund, and funding for Bridgetown High School for new toilets. These investments are in addition to the STEM upgrades.

In my home town in the Shire of Denmark, we are supporting local businesses, too. Recently I attended the regional economic development grant event and talked to Matt Candy, who is the owner and founder of MCC Contractors. It received \$140 000 through the RED grant for an expansion and a new integration facility project in Denmark, which will allow the service, repair and fabrication of machinery. In the event in Albany, Matt was talking about the huge growth in his staffing. He had near on doubled his staffing and was picking up lots of new projects, providing local jobs for people not only in Denmark, but also the surrounding communities of Walpole and Mt Barker and probably Albany. It has been 12 months, almost to the day, since the bushfires in Denmark, and I have to say congratulations to MCC Contractors, and in particular Matt Candy, who spent many hours on the diggers and dozers, moving sand around to try to create breaks to help keep our town and community safe.

In the Shire of Donnybrook–Balingup, we invested \$473 333, through the state black spot program, to upgrade parts of the Cundinup–Kirup Road by widening and sealing road shoulders, removing hazards from clear zones, improving drainage, pruning vegetation and installing pavement markings and signs.

In the Shire of Manjimup, we provided a major boost of \$289 320 to undertake 36 bushfire mitigation treatments, to reduce the risk of bushfire within that region.

I recently signed up with a volunteer bush fire brigade. I went through the training. I know firsthand how much these volunteers are needed within our communities. I roped my partner, Colin, in as well. He has so far already done one call-out to help over in Albany on a mop-up. I would really encourage people in the regions to put their hand up and go and learn more about what our volunteer bush fire brigades do. There are always roles for different people;

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they do not have to be on the fireground. Two locals and I put up our hands to help coordinate the Bushfire Ready Group in Ocean Beach in Denmark. We will be getting lists of names, finding out who in the area will need extra support if a fire comes and coordinating within our region. Again, I encourage people to find out about their local Bushfire Ready groups and get involved if they can.

In the Shire of Nannup, we provided \$145 000 through the Western Australian bicycle network grants program to deliver the southern approach to Nannup. If you are into cycling, as I know the member for Thornlie is, Nannup will definitely be on your radar. Nannup recently opened Tank 7, which is a hectic downhill mountain bike track. I know that, from Manjimup to Busselton, there are always cars now with bikes, driving through, parking up, going to the cafes and basically enjoying Nannup. We are really excited to provide that \$145 000 through the Western Australian bicycle network grants program.

Closer to home, in the Shire of Plantagenet, we have also supported the Kendenup Tennis Club to install floodlighting on four tennis courts through the Club Night Lights small grants program.

This week I helped launch the Southern Stars Holiday Park seasonal worker accommodation project. It is a fantastic collaboration with the state and local government, industry associations and local stakeholders, which looks to deliver seasonal worker accommodation for the Margaret River wine region. The South West Development Commission has put in \$50 000, which will help activate a separate section of the caravan park just for seasonal workers. It will be capped at \$30 a night. People will need to provide a letter showing that they are employed in seasonal work in the region, and they will get access to this great caravan park. I spoke to the owner, Todd. He said that they had been really lucky in that local tradies and suppliers understand the need for seasonal workers and assisted to get the project off the ground. They managed to get it happening within six weeks, and it will provide worker accommodation for up to 50 workers. The increase in accommodation will support the local wine and tourism industry, and will attract and retain the staff needed each year. Todd, the owner of the Southern Stars Holiday Park, said that he was pretty stoked to be helping with the vintage and keeping it on track, and that that would then keep the wine flowing, which I agreed with him was a good thing.

At the community cabinet we were asked questions about beach safety in Margaret River at Main Break. It is one of the main beaches. We get a lot of tourists there. It is ever popular. I have been advocating alongside the crew from the Margaret River recreational surfers group to get beach safety gear installed at Main Break. Not long after I was elected, I worked with the group to get a defibrillator put in down at the beach and to get the shark alarms serviced and make sure they are operating, which they are now. I have also been working with the Shire of Augusta–Margaret River to identify different ways to keep locals safe at the beach and upskill them to look after themselves there. It was great to see the shire's local boardriders groups, including the Margaret River Boardriders Club and the recreational surf riders along with the Margaret River Surf Lifesaving Club, collaborating to get two rescue boards, a first aid kit and a shark kit within a secure cage put at the Main Break toilet block and for people to be upskilled to be able to use them. This initiative will absolutely help to upskill locals and provide an on-the-ground, swift response.

I was recently in Augusta to meet the parents and citizens association and the principal of Augusta Primary School. They talked about how the playground had to be removed as it was no longer fit for purpose. I was pleased to help them secure \$25 000 from the Department of Education to replace their old playground with a brand new timber playground, which is ready for action this year. They are a pretty passionate group in Augusta, I must say, and there is a strong group of young women there who are advocating not only within the primary school, but also for child care. The principal and the P&C members talked me through their plans for growth of this ever popular little school. I am also advocating with Augusta and Districts Community Childcare to secure child care for the town. The town would like to activate more of its workforce and enable people to be able to take a break and use local, affordable childcare. I will continue to do that.

In the last 12 months, we have also had some recent transport wins with the Manjimup–Bunbury bus trial. Return services operate three times a week on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. In September, the member for Collie–Preston, the Minister for Transport and I got together to announce a Transwa trial of this service as well as services in Collie–Preston, following community feedback regarding the loss of the private service. I was pleased to work with the minister to get this trial in motion.

More recently, I have been working with the Narrikup community on road safety. I have been working with the Shire of Plantagenet and the Narrikup Road Safety Working Group to have a bus stop on Albany Highway, where cars go whipping by at 90 kilometres an hour, moved into the town of Narrikup. This would mean that kids and cars will no longer need to line up on Albany Highway. The cars will go through the town of Narrikup, which will be an incredible achievement. Hats off to the Narrikup Road Safety Working Group—100 per cent—for advocating for changing the location of the bus stop and actually getting it done. It has been great to work alongside that

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group. I also acknowledge the Shire of Plantagenet for proactively finding a solution to where the bus could go in the town of Narrikup. We have seen other safety improvements in the area, including a slip lane at the turnoff to Narrikup, which is currently also being evaluated.

We also announced that the Main Roads office in Manjimup will be reactivated. The newer office will accommodate 20 employees and support the transition of road maintenance back to Main Roads. The announcement was made in addition to our commitment to bring 490 regional road maintenance jobs back in-house at Main Roads.

I feel I also need to update the chamber on the work we are doing to support native forestry workers, businesses and communities to transition from native logging. I was recently in Nannup with the Minister for Agriculture and Food; Forestry; Small Business, Hon Jackie Jarvis. We were on the ground at the Nannup Community Resource Centre, which is to be commended; it is doing a sterling job. We were there to offer support to the workers who are transitioning away from the native forest industry—to catch up, have a conversation, hear about their concerns and also hear about their opportunities, what else they may like to go into and what training is available. TAFE was on hand. The jobs and skills centre was also on hand to help them with résumés and to identify other pathways that may be open to them. They are getting one-on-one support and are able to register for worker packages and training support. They were being talked through the process—again, one on one. They could make an appointment, come into the CRC and be supported directly. Some couples are coming in and some are coming back. It is a really supportive environment within Nannup at the moment.

We have also had a great response to the first round of the small business development and diversification grants that provide up to \$400 000 to help businesses relying on native forestry remain open and create jobs by diversifying, expanding or being innovative. I have been working alongside the “saw doctor”, who many members may have heard on the ABC and in many other media outlets. He will obviously not have anything to sharpen. He has been looking at what else he may diversify into. He is currently looking at setting up a farmstay in Manjimup. We have been working closely, talking about tourism and opportunities, which is amazing. His innovation and his discussions have also encouraged others to think about what else they could be doing, which is quite amazing.

[Member’s time extended.]

Ms E.J. KELSBBIE: It is great to be working alongside community members, hearing their ideas for diversification and innovation to keep jobs local. I believe that round 1 of the \$4 million community small grants program will open towards the end of February. These grants of up to \$100 000 will support sustainable projects that aim to stimulate the local economy, support tourism and events and build liveable communities in the native forest region. I really look forward to chairing that committee. A lot of people are coming to talk to us about innovation, ideas and events. People are quite excited about the opportunities that are coming with these funds.

It was really fabulous to host the Minister for Environment; Climate Action, Hon Reece Whitby, in Denmark last month. We held a series of really important meetings with our local community organisations, which, like me, are passionate about climate change and the environment. We visited local peat swamps, met with the amazing staff at Green Skills and hosted a community meeting with stakeholders to talk about the draft forest management plan. Discussions very much focused on fire mitigation, but they also covered ecological thinning, carbon sequestration and farm plantations. Representatives from the Shire of Denmark, the Shire of Manjimup, the Denmark Environment Centre, Gondwana Link, the Walpole–Nornalup National Park Association, Fire and Biodiversity WA, the Wilson Inlet Catchment Committee, Nannas for Native Forest, Bio Diverse Solutions and South Coast Bushcare Services attended. I was really pleased to be able to secure this visit. I thank the many community members who attended and took the time to meet the minister, show us around the peat swamps and discuss and take part in respectful two-way conversations about some of the issues that people in my community of Denmark are very passionate about. I thank them very much and I thank the minister for attending.

I would also like to update the chamber on the progress of the world-leading Pumped Up Walpole project—WA’s first microgrid pumped hydro system and facility. The joint Western Power and Power Research and Development renewable microgrid project will improve power reliability for homes and businesses in Walpole. I cannot tell members how many people have approached me about this project. They are really excited that it is starting to be built and that they will see a change in their delivery of energy. Importantly, this project will connect to the south west interconnected system. If there is a disruption on the network, the microgrid can work independently, providing power to local residents and businesses, so it will flick straight into it. The CEO, Colin Stonehouse, was recently telling me that the project is progressing well. The pipe was being unloaded, with Garth from Walpole Dingo Services on hand, and the dam is being built with Liam Brooks from Manjimup. They are doing a great job. It is awesome to see local contractors working on local projects for renewable energy to secure our town’s supply. I am really proud to be part of a McGowan government that awarded \$2 million from the Clean Energy Future Fund to this inspiring

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local job-creating renewable energy project. I am really excited to see this come to fruition but I am also really excited to see what Colin Stonehouse and his team do next.

We have delivered more fantastic investments and upgrades across the electorate of Warren–Blackwood through several of my election commitments, including to the Mt Barker Playgroup. Rosie, you are doing an amazing job. It is great to see young parents coming together to support one another. One parent comes to Mt Barker from Albany, which is 40 minutes away, to take part in this amazing organisation. My election commitment has enabled new toys, lockable storage, kitchen utensils—aka a coffee machine—and a dishwasher. I recently caught up with the kids and a lot of the parents, and I had a bit of a go at hand painting and playdough.

I also recently hopped into the Mt Barker swimming pool and chatted to members of the Mount Barker Amateur Swim Club, the Barracudas. My election commitment to them was an electronic swim timing system, which will be used not only by the Barracudas to time their swim meets and get more active, but also for swimming school carnivals and competitions. The Barracudas were absolutely inspiring. They are a really inclusive swim club. I met the swim team, the coaches and the support crew. I also got to chat to the kids, hearing about why they love swimming, how long they have been swimming and why they love competing. Of course, I hopped into the pool with the kids as well, which was fantastic. It was a bit of a shock to the parents, but that was fine.

Blackwood Youth Action is a group that I talk about quite a bit. Through my election commitment, we were able to deliver two driver support cars to help local kids get their licences. Not everyone has access to a vehicle to get their hours up. I also recently had the absolute pleasure of opening the newly renovated Blackwood Youth Action house, made possible through state and Lotterywest funding. The Blackwood Youth Action house is a space where the young people of Bridgetown and surrounds can hang out, play, catch up, learn life skills and connect. It is a no-judgement zone. It was co-designed with young people for young people. I was also able to share with BYA that it had secured \$100 000 from the Department of Communities for its pyramid project into schools, which it was very happy about. The Rotary Club of Bridgetown is a huge supporter of BYA, with proceeds from its Rotary Blackwood marathon relay donated to BYA. I believe it donated \$60 000 to this group last year. I would really like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the amazing work and support that the Rotary club provides to not only the community, but also the Blackwood Youth Action group. Dr Sarah Youngson, the chair, and Lisa Burgess, the CEO, are absolutely to be commended for their passion for the youth in their towns.

We have talked quite a bit about tourism today. I have been really fortunate to attend some amazing community events across the electorate. *Ducks on the Pond* is the new Nannup Men's Shed St Ayles skiff. I believe it is one of 11 in WA. I got to launch that, dripping a bit of whiskey on the boat before it went into a dam in Nannup. I got to have a bit of a row in the boat as well, which was fantastic. Hats off to the Nannup Men's Shed and also to the Denmark Community Rowing Association, which also built two boats; none of these people had ever built boats before. Augusta Community Rowing also had two boats. I was lucky enough to go to the St Ayles Skiff Regatta in Augusta recently, at which there were men's, women's, veteran and mixed teams from Augusta, Denmark, Margaret River, Nannup and Perth taking part in the events. These beautifully crafted boats bring together people of all ages, abilities and genders to row and basically just to have fun. Well done to Augusta Community Rowing, Nannup Men's Shed, Denmark Rowers, the Denmark Riverside Club and the Margaret River Rowing Club for taking part.

I also recently got to launch the Denmark Arts' Brave New Works festival in January. It is an awesome community arts event showcasing local talent and talent from further afield. In my early days in Denmark, I volunteered for Denmark Arts, working in marketing, and I have provided bar support for its Festival of Voice for probably about eight years; I have also helped it with different events. Denmark Arts is a great community arts organisation, pushing forward with an inclusive and innovative program in Denmark and surrounds. It has really great engagement with youth in our town and surrounding towns, so it is to be commended.

I was recently honoured to be a guest speaker at the Bushfire Ready sundowner at The Dam, in Denmark. We talked about the importance of being prepared, having an up-to-date and well thought through bushfire plan, and the importance of community Bushfire Ready groups.

I also attended two agricultural shows last year, in Margaret River and Bridgetown. It is a great way to meet the community and hear about what matters to the region and individuals. Huge congratulations to the organisers and volunteers who pull these agricultural shows off in the regions; they are to be commended.

In November, I had the honour of opening the National Natural Resource Management Knowledge Conference in Margaret River. The 2022 conference brought together people from all over Australia and the NRM sector to share knowledge and to discuss and develop visions for a collaborative future to support and enhance the natural environment. I spoke to that group about the balance within forestry and the importance of remembering empathy

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for those who are going through the transition away from decades of working in that industry. It was great to be able to talk about both sides.

It is a great honour to serve as the member for Warren–Blackwood, giving a voice to what matters in our diverse region and working alongside the many community groups, organisations, businesses, people and volunteers who make our community a great place in which to live, love, work and play. Thank you.

MS J.L. HANNS (Collie–Preston — Parliamentary Secretary) [5.22 pm]: I rise to make my reply to the Premier’s Statement as a very proud member of the McGowan Labor government. I will take this opportunity to highlight some of the fabulous work this government has done for the people of Collie–Preston. I will start by referring to the member for Roe’s comments in his contribution yesterday, in which he said that the McGowan government was “gifted” the financial and economic successes we are currently observing. Unfortunately, the member is not here, but I would like to point out to him that in 2017 the McGowan government was in fact “gifted” \$40 billion of debt from the previous Liberal–National government. That is not the sort of present I would like to have under my Christmas tree, so I would not really call it a gift.

I grew up in the country; I am from Yarloop. I know that a number of other members in this chamber also grew up in the country. I remember that at our local footy club and other facilities we used to have the old fundraising thermometer on the wall. If we were to commit to all the things the opposition is calling on the government to commit to—one thing after another, in terms of expenditure—we would reach the top of the old football thermometer fairly quickly. This government is absolutely delivering for our community, but in a totally responsible way in terms of balancing the finances and the needs of the people of Western Australia. I will take this opportunity to highlight a lot of those things today.

I do not know whether members are aware, but over the Christmas holidays, I went to England and France. Our first stop was obviously in London. I got into a cab and, as the London cabbies are pretty friendly, he noticed I had an Australian accent. He asked where I was from and I responded that I was from Western Australia, and he said, “Oh, you’ve got that Mark McGowan there, haven’t you?” I said, “Yes, we do.” He said, “Wish we could’ve had him in England over the last few years—what he’s done in terms of the economy and health.” If a cabbie in London gets it, I do not understand why the opposition does not!

Ms S.F. McGurk: Was his surname McGowan?

Ms J.L. HANNS: No, he was not a McGowan—sorry! He had a very broad English accent and had been driving cabs in London for 40 years. He went on to rattle off the economic successes of this government—from the other side of the world! He actually said to me, and it will stick with me forever: “It’s just common sense. When you have sick people, you don’t have an economy.” That was a clear reference to this government’s COVID response and how it has managed the pandemic very well over the last couple of years.

The McGowan government’s economic standing is world class, which means we can afford to support the people of Western Australia. I want to pick up on three key points before I start talking about my electorate of Collie–Preston, and I will start with the electricity credit—\$400 and \$600 to every Western Australian household as credit against their electricity bills. I know people in Collie—they have probably been fairly careful with their electricity—for whom it took until this week to run out of their electricity credit. That is two years of commitment to electricity credit. They ran out only this week; that is incredible. That is relieving the cost of living for Western Australians.

The Minister for Housing yesterday talked about Keystart loans—the expanded ability for people to access it, and the increase in the amount that people can be eligible for. I stand here having very proudly purchased my own home through the Keystart program. It was a fantastic foot in the door for me as, initially, a low-income earner, and it enabled me to progress as a home owner when I was really struggling to do it myself. It is an amazing opportunity for people in Western Australia to get on the housing list. People have talked to me about having taken advantage of that scheme more recently, and they have said that in this climate, it was actually more affordable than paying some of the rents they were being asked to pay in the private market.

In respect of social housing, I am really glad that the Minister for Housing is in the chamber today, because he was a driving force behind me being able to deliver in my community the opportunity to convert some under-utilised Government Regional Officers’ Housing into social housing. With the minister’s support, we were able to bring six households into new social housing, so I really thank Minister Carey for his ongoing work on and commitment to housing Western Australians right across the state.

Before I talk about some particular things in my electorate, I want to say, even though she is not here, what an incredible job the member for Kimberley has done for her local community in response to the Kimberley floods. I would like to thank all the emergency services, career staff, volunteers and all the people on the ground who

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support communities right across Western Australia. At the same time that the member for Kimberley was dealing with floods in her electorate, I was dealing with fires in my electorate. On one particular day in the Collie–Preston electorate, a number of career and volunteer firefighters and State Emergency Service volunteers were working to bring under control five individual fires within the area. The fires within Donnybrook, Yabberup, Beelerup, Noggerup, Mumballup and Brookhampton were all incredibly serious; in fact, some friends of mine were the only people who lost their house in those fires. I do not know how more houses were not lost in that individual fire. Actually, I do know; it was because of the fantastic work of the career and volunteer firefighters and all the people on the ground, including the residents who had chosen to stay and defend their properties. I would like to thank absolutely everybody who was involved in that. When Minister Whitby was in my electorate a couple of weeks ago, we managed to meet with some Canadian people who were working with the Parks and Wildlife Service in and around Wellington National Park. They had been involved in fighting fires in those areas in my electorate as well. It took people from across the world to keep my community safe. I would like to say a huge thankyou to all involved.

Before I move on, I would also like to mention the fact that Minister McGurk was in my electorate late last week. We were there to see the commencement of the works for the restoration of the Australind jetty. The Australind jetty is an iconic piece of infrastructure on the Leschenault Inlet. I can see the member for Forrestfield, the Deputy Speaker, smiling, so I assume he knows and is well aware of the benefits of the Australind jetty to the local community, as is the member for Cockburn, who also grew up in that area. The Australind jetty is an amazing location within my electorate that had deteriorated over time to the point at which it was not safe for the public to access. I had approached then Minister Kelly, the member for Bassendean, in his role as minister to see whether we could commit some funding to have that rebuilt. The funding was made available and I thanked the minister at the time for that. On Friday, as I said, Minister McGurk was there to showcase to the community the start of the works. That work is anticipated to be finished by December this year. The locals are very enthusiastic about being able to get back out crabbing and fishing off the end of the jetty. When I was talking to the local community about how important it was to secure the funding to get the jetty fixed, I think what brought it home for me was how people were saying, “I used to go there as a kid” or “I used to take my kids there, and now I’m bringing my grandkids to go and walk out on the jetty.” I think that tells the story of the people who live in my community and why it is so important to them. I am very pleased to deliver that for the community and I look forward to the jetty opening in roughly December this year.

I will switch now and talk about the police and justice services available within the Collie–Preston electorate. We have had significant upgrades to Collie Police Station and Donnybrook Police Station. The brand new \$8 million Capel Police Station opened in 2020. I would just like to say a huge thankyou to the police who work within the electorate of Collie–Preston for the work they do in keeping our community safe. They are incredible people. The police there highlighted that one of the initiatives of this government that makes policing so much easier for them is the funding of body cameras. They have said to me that it is a game changer for policing. I am very pleased to say that that initiative came from this government.

There is an incredible police and community youth centre in Collie. Funnily enough, Collie PCYC is its name! It is run by a huge number of dedicated volunteers, both on the board and also in the staff who run the centre and the programs for the young people. They have an incredible safe space program on Friday nights for young people in our community to visit. The community has thrown its weight behind supporting the PCYC safe space program, so much so that one of my small election commitments was to help upgrade the kitchen in the PCYC because it was pretty cruddy, to put it in a nice way. It was not a great place for young people to prepare their food in. On Friday nights, they go home to their families with a full tummy, which is fabulous. I helped to upgrade that kitchen. I obviously did not pick up a hammer or a nail, because that would be incredibly dangerous; I have no coordination, not only on scooters, but also in woodwork projects! South 32 come in on Friday nights and cook. On a Friday night, they rotate through their staff who volunteer in the safe space program and they have a My Kitchen Rules cooking competition for the young people. The kids have to appraise their cooking skills; it is all very competitive. The fantastic thing about that is the buy-in from the local community as well as the young people, and the support from the PCYC. A lot of incredible police officers regularly attend that program to create positive engagement in order to build relationships so that if and when those young people get into trouble in the local community, they have seen that the police are there to support them. That is an exceptional program. Long may it continue.

I want to raise the huge success we had in saving Collie Courthouse late last year, with the support of the Attorney General. The decision was made after quite a bit of discussion with the Attorney General. He says that I was very persuasive in my argument to make sure that the courthouse facility remained open. I am pleased about that. When we announced that to our community, the Attorney General came to Collie and everybody was delighted that the courthouse would remain open. He then said to me that he had another service that he thought would be fantastic to establish. That was the Legal Aid virtual office program. I worked with Legal Aid with the

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Attorney General's office, and we opened, not that long ago, its nineteenth virtual office within Western Australia. That means people have the opportunity to seek free legal advice wherever they are in Western Australia; the program runs right throughout regional Western Australia and in some metropolitan locations. I would like to say a huge thankyou to the Attorney General for his support in getting that service for the people of Collie. In fact, a number of people in Collie were travelling to Bunbury to access the Legal Aid service. That means that those people can stay in Collie and it frees up appointments for people based in the greater Bunbury region, which is also a benefit because more people can access those services. Just to finish off on that particular point, I would like to thank Julie Jackson and Kirstine Conchie for their role in getting that set up for the community and also Ronald and the team from the Collie Family Centre for being the host. Thank you to everybody for getting that up and running in my electorate.

Turning to health, I really try to look at things from a regional perspective, being a regional member. There was a recent announcement about support for Ronald McDonald House Charities to more than double the number of beds available for families to use when their children are sick and require an extended stay in the metropolitan area. I do not think I can underestimate the value that that has for regional families. On behalf of my community, I would like to thank the government for showing its support for regional families in probably the toughest times that they will ever experience when they need to access Ronald McDonald House. I personally know a number of families who had to access it and they were very grateful. This can only help more families, which is a fantastic opportunity. Thank you.

I will highlight some major health infrastructure in my electorate. People in my electorate access both Bunbury Hospital at South West Health Campus and Collie Hospital.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms J.L. HANNS: Bunbury hospital is already the beneficiary of a \$200 million upgrade. Those upgrades are underway. That is significant because Bunbury hospital is the largest and busiest regional hospital in Western Australia. People from across my electorate, and probably the electorate of Warren–Blackwood and potentially Roe, access those services. Certainly, people from my electorate of Collie–Preston do. The hospital received a new 30-bed modular ward as part of the upgrades and 60 additional full-time staff will be employed in the new ward—nurses, doctors and allied health professionals—so that is a fantastic opportunity. Late last year, Minister Sanderson travelled to Bunbury to announce the additional \$77.8 million for the redevelopment of the maternity, birthing and neonatal services at Bunbury hospital, which will provide a fantastic opportunity for families to be able to deliver their babies close to home and not have to access metropolitan services, particularly when there are complications in pregnancy and/or the birth. Expanding the capacity for women to birth close to home, supported by their family networks, is an outstanding outcome for Bunbury hospital, and I thank the minister for her continued support for such a key regional asset.

Collie Hospital is undergoing a \$14.7 million redevelopment of its health service. Once that is completed, it will have upgraded operating theatre rooms and a waiting room, reception, consult rooms, a telehealth room and improved patient recovery bays. Last year the Premier and I went to see the bare bones of the upgrade and toured the facilities. I had been there when it was in its unrenovated state. It is a fantastic hospital, and the staff are fantastic, but it certainly did need an upgrade. This government committed to that upgrade. I talked to two of the nurses who work at the hospital. They are friends of mine. Our kids grew up together so I am not talking out of school. They were blown away by how far along the build has come in such a short time and how amazing the facilities are. They describe them as world-class facilities in health. That is happening in regional Western Australia as we speak. I cannot thank the government enough for its commitment to regional health in Western Australia and its focus on making sure that people in the regions have significant access to the services that people in the metropolitan area also have access to.

As a previous teacher and deputy principal, education was my bread and butter. I want to highlight some of the key achievements for education in my area. The thing that really strikes me as an advocate of public schooling, having attended Yarloop Primary School and Harvey Senior High School, as some others in the chamber also did, is that we have committed as a government to making sure that the public education system in Western Australia is outstanding. I will take this opportunity to highlight some of the programs and also some of the infrastructure upgrades that have been undertaken in the education system in my electorate. I would also like to reflect on the fact that part of the government's investment in education is focused in the regions. My philosophy is that the colour of your skin, where you live or how rich your family is should not matter when a government is providing education to people in Western Australia. That is a key driver of my personal philosophy around education.

I take this opportunity to say that my daughter is also a product of the public school system. She moves on to university this year after having achieved outstanding success in her ATAR. She is off to study a Bachelor of Science

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in physics and will then do a masters in medical physics. I still have no idea what that means or what it qualifies her for, but she is very excited, as am I.

Ms C.M. Rowe: It sounds fancy!

Ms J.L. HANNS: It does sound fancy. It sounds as though we will be able to use her in the health system in probably five years' time. Clearly my daughter is not the only one; this is happening in families across Western Australia. I would love to say thank you to all the public schools for the continuing excellent education they provide people across Western Australia. I note that recently the government brought in some incentives to attract staff to regional and remote schools. My philosophy as a teacher was that I really wanted to do work in harder-to-staff schools. My first teaching position was at Tom Price Senior High School. After that I wanted to come back to Perth, but I did not necessarily want to teach in the western suburbs. I mean no disrespect to those in the western suburbs, but I think the key changes we can make in education for young people is to find those kids who really need that support and who do not necessarily have it at home or do not have the support networks from extended family, or just as a result of their circumstances. The commitment from my perspective was to look at schools such as the former Kwinana Senior High School. I am not singling out any school but that school was probably the best school I have ever taught at. The kids and the staff were amazing and some of the outcomes we achieved for the kids there were incredible.

We are providing incentives for regional and remote schools because they are harder to staff. The only criticism I have is that a number of teachers who live in Collie–Preston have moved to teach at Derby District High School. That is a fantastic opportunity for them. It is much easier for us in Collie–Preston to replace those teachers than it would be for Derby District High School, and that is the point of the incentives. I commend the minister on that approach to attract people to regional and remote schools.

I will talk briefly about the upgrades that schools in my electorate have received. I will speak more about the upgrades at Australind Senior High School because they have been ongoing for the past 12 months. The project will be ready for completion by the end of term 1 this year. On a recent visit to Australind Senior High School I met with the principal, Domenic Camera, who I also worked with at Collie Senior High School, and the school captains, Megan Bates and Ammie Turner. The girls were excited to see the progress of the build. It is a two-storey block of classroom upgrades worth \$15 million. That is a significant investment in one of the largest schools in the south west. I look forward to going back and seeing it finished. The girls were so excited because when they left year 12 they were going to have brand new toilet and bathroom facilities. That is pretty important for a kid in high school. I really look forward to seeing that progress.

One of the other things this government has done is commit to providing more staff and resources in public schools by adding 100 additional FTE for school psychologists by 2025. Anyone who has worked in the education system knows the importance of that support for young people. Given that teenagehood is a treacherous time at the best of times, and certainly for young people who are doing it tough, we can see that, we understand that as a government and we are investing in that very important sector.

There will be an additional 100 FTE for school psychologists to help address young people's mental health issues and for the kids doing it tough who need an ear to listen to them. I welcome that initiative. It is something people I have worked alongside in schools have been saying to me for quite some time.

I would like to talk about a new government initiative that places career practitioners in schools. In my electorate, Eaton Community College and Collie Senior High School have been beneficiaries of that initiative. It enables us to add value for students exploring their careers. In talking about that, I want to touch on the Collie transition process, which is part of the \$662 million this government has invested to support my community and the broader south west community to transition away from employment in coal-fired power stations. As I speak, the jobs and skills centre is being set up on the main street of Collie. Transitioning workers, young school leavers and people looking for a change of career currently can go to the TAFE for support, but once the purpose-built jobs and skills centre is completed, they will be able to go there to access a number of services that will support them with ongoing job opportunities. We are making sure that we create new opportunities in Collie for major industries, tourism businesses and those sorts of things to set up and employ local people once the transition has occurred.

I want to say a huge thankyou to the Just Transition working group. It is an amazing collection of people from government agencies, the local government, industries, unions and the community who have worked together since 2019 to have a conversation about what our transition should look like. This is a community-led process in which the government responds to requests from groups to address community needs, which is a fantastic model. It is fantastic that it has been internationally recognised, as Minister Johnston said today during question time, and nationally recognised. Representatives of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet visited last year to see the work we are doing in the transition space.

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I thank the Premier and the government for their commitment to and support for the people of Collie–Preston. I am very proud to be a member of this government. I commend the Premier’s Statement to the house.

MR M. HUGHES (Kalamunda) [5.52 pm]: Thank you, Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to speak in response to the Premier’s Statement. Before I begin, I would like to congratulate the newly appointed parliamentary secretaries. It is great to see such a talented group. I am sure future ministers are amongst them. I would like to thank Sabine Winton for her company over the last five years. She is now Minister for Community Services; Early Childhood Education, which is great. I have swapped Sabine Winton for Dave Kelly so the next two years will be interesting, no doubt.

I have a few things to say. I remind members that I was first elected to state Parliament in 2017, a month after my sixty-seventh birthday, which is notionally two years after what is regarded as the right age of retirement. Interestingly, people in France are contesting raising the retirement age from 60 to 62. In that sense, stepping into this place was not an aspirational career move; it provided me with the opportunity to be part of something much bigger than being the principal of a school, which I had enjoyed for about 21 years. It was interesting to hear the contributions made by members of this place who had careers as teachers within the state school system. Of course, I was in the independent system.

One of the significant markers of the McGowan government’s competence as manager of the state’s finances, as pointed out by the Premier in this statement, was the reinstatement of Western Australia’s AAA global credit rating. Added to that, the state’s economy continues to outperform other states and territories, and comparable jurisdictions around the world. It is worth reflecting on this achievement and the McGowan government’s sustained and focused effort to rectify—I am glad to see a member of the opposition is present in the chamber—the mess left by the previous Liberal–National government. It should not be overlooked or taken for granted. It underscores the McGowan Labor government’s capacity as a sound manager, which is in stark contrast to members opposite who seek to convince the Western Australian public that they—the six of them over there—are the core of an alternative government. I dispute that. Their contributions to the debate on the Premier’s Statement reflect that they are really not fit to govern.

Last year, Western Australia was awarded the highest rating for the first time after losing it under the Liberal–National government. I went back over some of the media commentary at the time. I was interested in what Colin Barnett said when, in 2013, he was asked about the government’s role in this downgrade. He said —

“The only thing I can say is maybe we’re guilty of trying to do too much too quickly, maybe we need to slow down a little bit.”

He then foreshadowed drastic budget measures to try to get the credit rating back up, including the potential sale of state assets. He said —

“They —

He was referring to Standard and Poor’s —

call for fiscal responsibility so get ready because there’s going to be a fair dose of it,” ...

“We’re going to have expenditure cuts right across every area.

“Maybe some of the utilities, maybe some things that we don’t need to do, maybe some areas of government activity that could be contracted out, as we’ve done in some areas, so expect to see a little more of that.”

I think that statement really characterises the Barnett government’s desperation and its incapacity to manage the state’s finances. We know of some of the outcomes from that. TAFE fees were hiked up 500 per cent. We heard about that today. Teacher assistants were pulled out of schools. I think we replaced 300 of them when we came to office. This afternoon one of the members referred to how important it is to have good teacher assistants in classrooms, particularly for children with disabilities. Then we had massive increases in duties and charges—electricity, you name it. The Barnett government pulled back on service delivery, looked at selling off utilities—Synergy and Western Power were certainly part of its agenda—and anything else it could think of doing. The Liberal–National government failed to combat climbing, unsustainable debt levels or to address structural budgetary issues of its own making.

Of course, the Langoult report uncovered much more than “doing too much too quickly”. The report was a window onto the Liberal–National government’s cavalier approach towards the management of the state’s finances between 2008 and 2017. This is a key document, member for Cottesloe, and a cautionary tale for those who aspire to govern our state. The report remains essential reading, especially for those opposite in case they forget they brought the state close to the edge of bankruptcy. What did the report find? It found botched major projects, warnings ignored from senior officials, poor governance and poor management of the royalties for regions scheme, all of which combined to cripple the state’s finances. It was a scathing assessment by the much respected former Under Treasurer of the Liberal–National government’s management of the state that left a debt bill projected, as we heard from the

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previous speaker, to be tracking to a level exceeding \$40 billion had the Barnett Liberal–National government remained on the Treasury bench. It is a tale of incompetence and unrestrained expenditure in excess of income of a scale unprecedented in the history of the state. Minister Johnston mentioned that for every dollar coming in, that government was spending \$1.13.

In making last year’s rating announcement, Standard and Poor’s Global said the upgrade was a result of Western Australia’s track record of robust financial management, a very high income economy and exceptional liquidity since the election of the Western Australian Labor government. The report also observed that the upgraded rating reflected Western Australia’s budget performance and the fact that the Western Australian government had obtained a more equitable GST deal. That is something, as we know, that the Barnett government did not even posture on; it would rather not talk about it and would not go to that area. Of course, if you do not make the effort, you do not succeed—and it took this government to do something about it. I do not think we need to be schooled by the opposition on the way that this government in the fortieth and forty-first Parliaments is governing the state of Western Australia. The Standard and Poor’s Global report also commented favourably on the government’s decision to spend \$33.9 billion on infrastructure over the next four years, including its Metronet project that continues to be criticised by the opposition.

At the top of the list of this government’s achievements, I would put its management of COVID, which it has done better than any other state and territory in the commonwealth and arguably better than most jurisdictions across the globe. That was in large part because of our closed borders and mandatory vaccination policy for key occupations, without which there would have been massive disruption to our economic activity. Where was the opposition in all of this? It was providing lukewarm support but chiefly undermining those policies and misreading the popular mood and overwhelming support of Western Australians to save lives and conduct business as usual with minimal restrictions.

Since being returned to government with the overwhelming support of Western Australians across the state, as evidenced by the numbers in this chamber and in the other place, the government has continued its reforming legislative agenda it began in the fortieth Parliament. The list is substantial but here are some of the reforms I have been particularly interested in myself: the introduction of sweeping democratic electoral reform—I know that Mal Bryce would embrace this government for doing what was so necessary in reform of the upper house; the creation of safe access zones around abortion clinics; the reform of Aboriginal heritage legislation; a crackdown on ticket scalping; allowing police to ban bikies from associating with each other and wearing their patches; improvements to the security of payments in the building and construction industry; giving police new power to ban people from “protected entertainment precincts”; compelling people in authority, including ministers of religion, to report allegations of child sex abuse and other forms of abuse; overhauling bail considerations in order to protect child victims; creating a new legislative framework to continue to manage COVID, effectively headed by the Commissioner of Police; and beginning the reform of Crown casino, fulfilling the recommendations of the royal commission.

Of particular note for me was the action taken by this government in response to climate change and the move to renewables and net zero emissions. My community applauds the Western Australian government’s move to end logging in native forests and to invest in softwood timber plantations to save around 400 000 hectares of native trees that were otherwise at risk of being felled. Another key decision was made, which I know is not the direct reason we are going to phase out coal-fired power stations in Collie, as commented by Minister Johnston, but it will help deliver our climate change objectives.

There is a long and impressive list of legislation that has been steered through the forty-first Parliament and there is more to come, as outlined by the Premier yesterday. Not least, there is the flagged reform to modernise the state’s abortion laws and the rewriting of the Equal Opportunity Act that is creating some significant discussion within my community, particularly with fundamentalist church groups—I include in that the current position of the Catholic Church.

I would like to turn to something of particular importance to me, not because I have just celebrated my seventy-third birthday, but those members present who were part of the fortieth Parliament would know my continuing advocacy for prioritising the adequate provision of quality residential aged care and support for the aged living in their own homes. I am encouraged that the Albanese Labor government has made a clear commitment to implement the recommendations of the royal commission. This is in stark contrast to the Liberal–National government that demonstrably continued to drag its feet for close to a decade on this need to reform. From this point onwards—I say this to the national government—no more time can be wasted on this important matter. As we know, aged care is the responsibility of the commonwealth government. However, older people across the country, including in Western Australia, continue to be ill-served by the legacy of the dismal response of the Liberal–National government in Canberra to the need for reform under successive Liberal–National governments. The royal commission saw

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the need for a new act to enshrine the rights of older people who are either seeking or receiving aged care. Such a rights-based approach must guarantee universal access to the supports and services that older people require. This points to the need for a new standard for assessing progress in the administration of aged care; that is, the extent to which these particular human rights are met through universal access to appropriate services at appropriate standards.

The royal commission indicated that aged care required \$10 billion a year of extra funding beyond the allocations made under the Liberal–National government in order to mend a broken system. The Morrison government missed the mark by a staggering \$6.5 billion a year. This funding shortfall aside, again I question whether the Morrison government ever intended to rise to the challenge presented to it by the royal commission. In effect, the Morrison government cherry-picked the recommendations of the royal commission. Its response was not the generational change that it promised. By ignoring the key and generational change recommendations, the Morrison government again short-changed older people in our communities and continued to pour billions of dollars into what remains, until a reform is fully brought in, a dysfunctional system. It will take this Albanese government's strong commitment to fix residential aged care and the funding system provided to enable older people to remain in their own homes with adequate levels of support and to end the widespread rotting that takes place in the cost of the provision of services. I again ask members to reflect upon how it is possible that a recipient of a level 4 home care package—the highest level of home-care support—worth around \$52 000 receives so little practical care. This \$1 000 a week on average buys only eight hours and 45 minutes of support. As I have said, I am optimistic that in its first term, the Albanese government will oversee a complete overhaul of the system to ensure an uplift in the delivery of care and bring to an end what can only be described as an exorbitant and unwarranted set of administrative charges. However, given that aged care is a federal government responsibility, there are few levers available to the state government to influence outcomes in this important area of public policy. Nevertheless, I am pleased that the McGowan Labor government has acted to do whatever it can.

I remind members that within nine months of coming to office, the McGowan Labor government established an interagency aged-care availability working group in pursuance of its election promises. The working group identified five specific responses to the barriers impacting on residential aged-care development. It is doing all it can to ensure the provision of suitable land for residential aged-care development. In fact, it is a priority now incorporated in the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage assessment process in determining the future use of surplus government land. However, I am concerned that although this systematic consideration is available and will ensure that government is able to identify the land available, it does not remove a key obstacle, which is the capacity of both not-for-profit and commercial enterprises to invest in residential aged care. We can bring the land to market, as we have done, but it requires either not-for-profit or commercial providers to invest. At present, there are no firm plans for investment in residential aged care on the table in Western Australia beyond existing commitments—projects that are, in fact, underway. In this state, we are short 3 400 residential aged-care places. My question is: what can we do to assist the industry and those providing aged care to take up the available land opportunities provided by government?

By default, managing the health and wellbeing of those in need of aged care places a burden on our hospitals.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr M. HUGHES: As part of this year's budget, \$59.5 million has been allocated to fund 120 aged-care beds to help transition patients who are waiting for aged-care places out of hospital, thus relieving pressure on hospitals, but there needs to be a structural solution to this problem involving state and commonwealth governments. On 17 June 2022, after the first meeting of the national cabinet since the federal election, the Prime Minister announced a commitment from the commonwealth, states and territories to work together to identify practical improvements to the health system, and specifically the connections between GPs and hospitals and practical ways to get aged-care residents and National Disability Insurance Scheme participants out of hospital and into a more appropriate setting, so there is some hope. There is a national dialogue between the commonwealth, states and territories about how we can achieve an outcome to provide a better structure for delivery of health, aged-care and NDIS services.

The evidence in aged care points to the trend of older Western Australians remaining at home with support as required. It is not only cheaper, but also a consumer-favoured option. Many people will not require residential aged care. For those who do, it will be required much later in life and, on average, for a shorter duration. Due to the increasing adoption of home-care packages, increased comorbidity with age and increasing prevalence of dementia, those entering residential aged care will do so in a much frailer condition. Essentially, there is an intersection of the need for adequate provision of health care for people in aged care with a place for these people to be taken care of in situations in which they cannot be taken care of in their own homes. In my view, we need to provide an integrated system at a state level that is preferably overseen by the state Minister for Health. At present, the system is not joined up.

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I have worked hard to help the state government respond to my community's aged-care needs. The people in the electorate of Kalamunda have been direct beneficiaries. I have previously outlined—I will not do it again—the provision of opportunities for the expansion of existing nursing homes within the electorate, as well as the provision of government land. However, I particularly want to point out the repurposing of Heidelberg Park on Pomeroy Road in Lesmurdie for aged care. This zoning process was fast-tracked within the strategic planning requirements under the watch of the Minister for Planning, resulting in the process being completed within 12 months. The land has been offered to the market and the preferred proponent Boston Group/Rosewood has been selected. The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage is in the process of working with the group to finalise the contract for the land transfer. I am looking forward to advice about whether this has been achieved.

In the time that I have left, I will refer to a couple of other matters that are of concern to my immediate community. The issues that emerged during the community debate on the suitability and sustainability of structure plan 34—that is, the North Stoneville development—and its comprehensive rejection by the Shire of Mundaring and detailed refusal by the Western Australian Planning Commission have not been resolved in the eyes of my community. The Save Perth Hills group is concerned by the recent order by the State Administrative Tribunal after the protracted mediation process to require the proponent to resubmit an amended structure plan 34 for reconsideration by the Western Australian Planning Commission by the middle of this year.

My community and I are keen to see the amended submission. I remain sceptical that an urban development anywhere near the scope proposed by the proponent as envisaged by the original SP 34 application is achievable or, in fact, sensible. The issues that have been highlighted by the whole community debate around structure plan 34 go straight to the heart of the need to undertake a review of the planning principles and policies that apply across the fire-prone hills, in light of the effects of climate change and the common sense need to do all we can to protect our forested areas and bush. In effect, they are the lungs of Perth.

I also indicate that I think work needs to be undertaken by the state government to assist the Shire of Mundaring to improve land use opportunities in the Mundaring township itself and across the shire, using the multi-criteria analysis model applied in consideration of the sustainable expansion of the Pickering Brook town site. As members will be aware, I chair the Pickering Brook and surrounds sustainability and tourism strategy working group that reports to the government task force on the ways in which we can improve the economic circumstances of both the town site and the surrounding community.

One thing that I am concerned about is the outcome of the Pickering Brook town site investigations. This work was completed. In November 2020, the honourable Minister for Planning released part 1 of the report of the strategy—it will come in two parts—which deals with the expansion of the town site. Despite the considerable work and resources allocated to the project and the project being endorsed by the task force—I might add that the potential town site expansion is being gazetted as a potential urban area for development—it is of great disappointment that after two years' progress towards the necessary metropolitan scheme amendments to facilitate the modest but meaningful expansion of the Pickering Brook town site, we have hit a problem. The sewage disposal is proving to be problematic and at present it is difficult, from my perspective anyway, to see a way forward. That is notwithstanding a recently updated district water management strategy provided by the City of Kalamunda to the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation in support of what would become its application to the Western Australian Planning Commission to initiate a metropolitan scheme amendment.

I have three minutes left. One of the things that I would like to comment on is some of the matters that I will continue to focus on over the next couple of years. My continuing focus will be on ensuring that school facilities established in ageing schools in the hills communities that I represent keep pace with the demands and expectations for the education of students in the twenty-first century. There is a particular need, I believe, to examine the suitability of classroom accommodation for the early childhood phase of learning in schools, and, as I mentioned before, Glen Forrest Primary School is a particular case in point. The school would benefit from the construction of a purpose-built early years learning centre. I was pleased that the Premier visited Lesmurdie Primary School late last year to view the halfway point of the now completed \$17 million rebuild of the school. I am also pleased that Kalamunda Senior High School has been the beneficiary of over \$23 million for new classrooms. However, the school will require the continuation of a phased redevelopment of the campus in accordance with its new master plan, to include an upgrade of its performing arts and manual arts facilities. Again, I want to reinforce the fact that I would like to work very closely with the member for Swan Hills to prosecute the case for a comprehensive review of the facilities at Eastern Hills Senior High School.

A number of other projects are on my list that I would like to achieve before the next election, not least doing something about state of the Kalamunda Water Park. Given the number of primary schools that we have in the area and the ageing population, we need a facility of that type on the doorstep, for both the young and old.

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Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker (David Scaife), for the opportunity to make a contribution. I am humbled to be given the opportunity to continue to serve my community in the forty-first Parliament and to be part of what is arguably the most successful government this state has seen since the foundation of responsible government.

DR J. KRISHNAN (Riverton — Parliamentary Secretary) [6.22 pm]: I rise to make a contribution to the Premier's Statement. First, I take this opportunity to congratulate the new ministers and parliamentary secretaries in both houses. I also thank former ministers Hon Alannah MacTiernan and Hon Dave Kelly for their contribution to the people of Western Australia. I also congratulate the newly elected Leader of the Opposition and Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the newly elected opposition Whip. I thank the former Leader of the Opposition for her contribution. I also congratulate the new Leader of the Liberal Party and thank the former Leader of the Liberal Party for his contribution.

I am humbled, honoured and privileged to represent the people of Riverton under the McGowan Labor government. In March 2021, the people of Western Australia, without a doubt, decided who should be governing them. That significant majority is one of the reasons why I am today standing before the house as the member for Riverton. I have worked hard to try to do the best for the people of Riverton. Throughout the month of February, we have been recollecting what we have delivered to the community.

At this juncture, can I thank my electorate staff, Daniel, Mark and Michelle, who sat together and compiled a list of things that we have delivered under this McGowan Labor government to Riverton. They have done their best to list 28 things that we have done for Riverton for 28 days in February, and they have tried to match with that number. They have done their best.

One: \$1.5 million was donated to the new Indian community centre, the first of its kind. The Indian community here makes a significant contribution to Western Australia in many ways, and finding a home for them was extremely important. The federal government gave \$2.5 million of funding, but the project stalled and was unable to be completed without the state government funding of \$1.5 million, which the McGowan Labor government delivered. The new centre is up and running and functioning actively. A couple of weeks back, the centre had the inaugural first senior day care, with multiple communities now fully using the community centre.

Two: I was fortunate to host two major community champions dinners. The contributions that the volunteers in Riverton make to make the lives of people in Riverton better are significant. I hosted a dinner to thank them, and we named that dinner the "Community Champions Dinner". We prefer to call the volunteers "community champions" for their contributions. In 2021 and 2022, we hosted a large community champions dinner, which was very well received by the community. We were thankful for the opportunity to say a sincere thanks to the community champions.

Three: There were three new exhibits for the RAAF Association Aviation Heritage Museum. I am very fortunate to have the RAAFA Aviation Heritage Museum situated in my electorate of Riverton. It carries a long history, and the passion of the Air Force. I was very fortunate to be able to assist with the three new exhibits for that particular museum.

Four: I and my team in the office were fortunate enough to support the needy by participating in four blood donation days in 2022. I encourage anyone and everyone who is able to donate blood to go forward and do that. It is very helpful for the needy.

Five: The McGowan Labor government committed \$5 million for the Chung Wah Association to build a new community centre. I am pleased to say that the Chung Wah Association has made very good progress in identifying some land—it is nearing finalisation—and we expect that construction will commence in early 2024. That was also one of my election commitments, which I am proud to say that we were able to deliver as we promised.

Six: There was \$625 000 allocated for change rooms at John Connell Reserve. When I was working during my campaign, it was embarrassing to see, or even hear people tell me, that the girls who participate in sports at John Connell Reserve were changing in the car park because there were no separate change rooms for them. I am proud that I advocated for that. I am really pleased that the McGowan government has delivered the change rooms, which will be opened in the next few weeks.

Seven: Seventy members of the Lions Club were hosted in Parliament House in the seventy-fifth year of the operation of the Lions Club. Lions clubs make a significant contribution to the community. It was an honour to host the members. I saw it as a great opportunity to host them and thank them for their contribution.

Eight: There was \$80 000 for the new Shelley Primary School bathroom upgrades, which have been delivered. The primary schools in the electorate are very vibrant. Communities move to Riverton to provide the best education for their kids, clearly indicating that the primary schools and the high schools in the electorate of Riverton are the best performing schools in the state.

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Nine: There were 9 000 free rapid antigen tests distributed through my office. They not only gave people the confidence to participate in their family gatherings, but also allowed people to go to work, confident in having a negative test, which resulted in increased participation at work and increased activity and made it easier to come out of the COVID pandemic.

Ten: I have been fortunate to personally sponsor 10 students from my electorate to participate in national championships. Excellent students sometimes give up competing at national championships simply because they cannot afford the expenses involved. I am glad that we were able to support them.

Eleven: There was over \$11 500 in sponsorship for local Rotary, Probus and RSL clubs, including new signage to the Riverton RSL club.

Twelve: Willetton Senior High School is one of the best performing schools in the state. I was fortunate to be able to commit \$12.5 million from the state for construction at Willetton Senior High School, which is underway and expected to be completed any time now and open for students to use. Two students from Willetton Senior High School achieved the perfect ATAR score of 99.95 in 2022. The two students were Ian Pinto and Juseong Han. I was honoured to meet them in person and congratulate them. I was pleased to know that they had offers from multiple universities to choose where they wanted to go.

Thirteen: I have hosted 13 separate volunteer groups in the Parliament as a way to honour the tireless work of volunteers.

Fourteen: I was very grateful to attend and enjoyed attending 14 school graduations in my electorate in 2022. Though I was not able to be there for the entire program on a couple of occasions, I did my best to support the schools, because I have repeatedly said that education is in the genes of the people of Riverton.

Fifteen: As part of my election commitment, we were able to contribute \$15 000 to the Herald Avenue Senior Citizens Centre for new shade sails and audiovisual upgrades. The level of participation at this centre is very pleasing to watch. It is fantastic to see the seniors walking into the centre to actively participate in its activities. Premier Mark McGowan once visited the centre. Surprisingly, both of us were handed bats to play table tennis. Unfortunately, both of us were put on one side and on the other side were seniors who were able to beat us quite easily!

Sixteen: There was \$160 000 for the Corinthian Park Tennis Club for court upgrades—for gel courts. It is one of the clubs that has a lot of seniors, but we also see very young kids training on a regular basis. It happens to be on my driving path, and it is pleasing to watch all the kids, all the way to seniors, utilising the facility to the maximum.

Seventeen: My team and I were able to host over 17 hours of community forums in Riverton, which covered topics like cybercrime, falls prevention and dementia. We are planning to conduct these forums on an ongoing basis, particularly for the benefit of the seniors in Riverton.

Eighteen: There was \$1.8 million for Burrendah Primary School for an undercover assembly area to be built. When I went there a couple of weeks back, construction was going on at full speed, and it is expected to be completed in the very near future.

Nineteen: The McGowan Labor government was able to contribute \$19 000 for vital upgrades to the intersection of Vahland Avenue and Collins Road in Willetton.

Twenty: There was \$200 000 secured through the Department of Communities for the stage 2 upgrades to the Rostrata Family Centre. This particular centre has close to 1 000 members of various groups. The bookings are pretty much completely blocked every day. It is so actively used that the space is just not big enough. The stage 2 construction, with the support of the City of Canning, is expected to commence any time.

Twenty-one: There was \$21 000 worth of information technology equipment for the Zonta House Refuge Association. I was also fortunate to contribute towards a purple bench in one of the parks in Riverton, which is to remind people about standing up against domestic violence. Zonta House, which is situated in Riverton, does a fantastic job. I take this opportunity to thank its staff for their contribution to fighting domestic violence.

Twenty-two: There was \$22 000 for the Willetton community garden for a new trailer and various supplies. It is a small group with a small membership, but a number of people utilise the facility and it keeps the community engaged and active. I see happy kids running around learning about gardening and plants.

Twenty-three: We were able to contribute more than 2 300 hotdogs to the primary schools during the federal election as a fundraiser. Every primary school parents and citizens association really worked hard.

[Member's time extended.]

Dr J. KRISHNAN: The P&Cs worked hard to raise funds to support the schools, and every bit of support we could provide was very much appreciated.

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Twenty-four: There was \$2 400 for a defibrillator to be installed at the Bull Creek RAAFA Club. I can still see the happiness of the seniors when we offered that, because if they feel there is a need for the defibrillator to be used, it is there for them to access. They had a security fence when this was offered.

Twenty-five: There was \$250 000 for upgrades to Castlereagh School, including painting the interior. This is one of the schools in my electorate that is close to my heart. It provides some of the best services for challenged kids.

Twenty-six: There was more than \$26 000 donated for community projects from multicultural events to concerts, facility upgrades and beyond.

Twenty-seven: We managed to send more than 2 700 milestone birthday cards to constituents in Riverton. They were very pleased to hear from their local member on their milestone birthday.

Twenty-eight: I and my office are proud to say that we are major sponsors of over 28 clubs in the electorate of Riverton.

Twenty-eight days were not enough to list what we have delivered for Riverton; there are a few more, and I would hate to ignore them, so I will quickly run through that list. We donated to the Willetton Ladies Probus Club for its thirty-fifth anniversary; we secured funding for more than 30 trees to be planted in our local areas; there was \$31 000 for Willetton Child Care to upgrade its playground; and more than \$16 000 was donated for upgrades at the Willetton Premier Cricket Club, including a new visual system. The biggest commitment on which progress has been made with the budget being considered and approved is the \$35 million commitment to Rossmoyne Senior High School, which will get a brand new school campus in the years to come, and this is just the first stage of that commitment.

The McGowan Labor government is delivering in all aspects. When looking through the list of achievements, I thought back to basic lessons my father taught me. My dad repeatedly drilled into my head the three things we need to consider: the intention to do something, the actions we take to materialise that intention and the effects on oneself and others. If all three are positive, there is no hesitation in getting things done. If the intention is right, and the right action is taken, and it is going to bring about positive effects for ourselves and others, we should do it. This made me look at every action or policy that the McGowan Labor government has delivered. Without a doubt, the intentions are right, the right actions are being taken and positive effects are being seen in the community to make a difference for the people of Western Australia.

There were some negative comments made about the health system being in crisis. I partly acknowledge that, but it is important to note that not a single city or state in the entire world has not been affected by COVID, which has resulted in workforce crises and problems. The chronic disease that was under the surface has come up to the surface now, increasing demand. The complications have worsened during the COVID period. I have been closely observing the implementation of policies by the Minister for Health and the Department of Health, and I am very pleased to say that the data shows we are already making good inroads to progress. The ambulance ramping figures always fluctuate and there is always a change between December and January. In January 2023, we saw a big dip in ramping numbers, clearly indicating that we are on the downward trend of ramping figures, to make things much better for the people of Western Australia, and making accessibility a priority.

I have already spoken about education. I am very proud that the McGowan Labor government is supporting schools in the way they need to be supported. I am very proud of the initiatives taken to make education a priority for the kids of Western Australia.

In respect of jobs, we have record employment and record participation, resulting in people being able to choose what they want to do, rather than doing a job because they are desperate for work. Things are changing. There is so much demand in every industry, and Western Australia got its AAA credit rating back because of the McGowan Labor government's robust financial management. I still remember that the 2021 state election campaign was about not only keeping Western Australia safe, but also keeping WA strong. A promise was made and the promise was kept, and there is no doubt that Western Australia is one of the strongest states in the world. There is more support for TAFE; no other government has provided the same level of support the McGowan Labor government has provided to TAFE to encourage our kids to be the skilled workers of the future.

With regard to international engagement, both the Premier and the Deputy Premier have taken trips to put Western Australia on the map. I was very fortunate to be part of the largest WA delegation that has ever been to India, under the leadership of our Deputy Premier. There were various sectors—the mining industry, fisheries, ICT innovation, international education, arts and heritage. It was a busy week; we spent about eight days in India, engaging with various stakeholders, and that kept my life very busy. There were a lot of conversations, a lot of trips, a lot of memorandums of understanding and a lot of transactions. I was fortunate to be invited by the government of Tamil Nadu as part of the Tamil diaspora. It invited Tamil people from around the world. I was there to put Western Australia on the world map.

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Regarding transport, Metronet is the infrastructure of the future. If members read *Hansard* from when the Leader of the House was concluding our session last year, they will read that he made the statement “Rita the concreter”. She has been delivering every program that is possible for the people of Western Australia. The government has contributed towards easing the cost of living, and the freeze of two-zone fares will make a significant difference to the hardworking families who commute on a very regular basis.

Coming to police, I recently visited the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation for various things that were happening with Indian engagement. Through it, I came to know that the police department has taken a unique approach in these difficult times. Yes, there is a scarcity of available rental properties, but a special team was supporting new recruits, giving them advice from finding the right rental property to finding the right school for kids and assisting them in settling down in Western Australia in order to be serving for a long time. I have been regularly communicating with both the Cannington Police Station and Murdoch Police Station and I get updates. As the Premier said today in question time, the crime rate is coming down. I know there is more work to be done, but I am sure that the work is being carried out and it is going to be great.

With any program or policy, the McGowan Labor government has the right intention and is taking the right action. We are seeing the positive effects for the people of Western Australia. I am very grateful to be part of this team to make my little contribution towards the people of Western Australia.

MS M.J. HAMMAT (Mirrabooka — Parliamentary Secretary) [6.52 pm]: I also rise to make a contribution in response to the Premier’s Statement. It is a great opportunity, as many have done before me, to pause and reflect on some of the things that are happening in our electorates, in my case in my electorate of Mirrabooka, and to think about some of the broader work that the McGowan Labor government is doing that is making a real and significant difference to the people of Western Australia.

In my contribution, I want to talk about some of the things that have been happening in the Mirrabooka electorate. I want to share some of the great things that have occurred since the house adjourned at the end of last year. One of those that is very important and significant in my electorate is the celebration of the Lunar New Year, which began on 22 January. Lunar New Year is celebrated by a great many people in Western Australia, particularly by people from China, but also North and South Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore and Brunei and, importantly for my electorate, the Vietnamese community. This year, the majority of those cultures welcomed the year of the rabbit, which is what the majority of them are celebrating. However, the Vietnamese community is celebrating the year of the cat rather than the year of the rabbit. I am told by Dr Anh Nguyen, who is the president of the Vietnamese Community in Western Australia, that this year in fact is the year of the precious cat, a very auspicious year that comes around only once every 60 years. It is considered particularly good fortune to give birth to a baby girl during this year. With that in mind, I want to give a shout-out to Hon Ayor Makur Chuot who will shortly give birth. She tells us she will be giving birth to a girl. I look forward to seeing how her daughter progresses, being born in such an auspicious year.

There are many wonderful celebrations of the Lunar New Year in the Mirrabooka electorate and beyond. In my electorate in Mirrabooka, we were delighted to have the opportunity to once again host the Vietnamese Lunar New Year celebrations, or the Tet festival, as it is known. This festival attracts thousands of people to the heart of the Mirrabooka electorate over a Friday and a Saturday evening. The event is run by the Vietnamese Community of Western Australia and it is made possible by the tireless work of its president, Dr Anh Nguyen, and by the many, many volunteers who contribute. I want to take this opportunity to thank them for their amazing work in hosting yet another successful event. There was so much to enjoy at this year’s celebration of the year of the precious cat. The highlight for me, and I think the majority of people there, was when Minister Buti and Dr Anh Nguyen unveiled the foundation stone for the Vietnamese cultural community centre that will soon be built on the corner of Curtis Way and Marangaroo Drive in Girrawheen. The cultural centre has been made possible because the McGowan government helped the community secure the land and it has also supported the project through funding from the Office of Multicultural Interests and from Lotterywest. When this community centre is complete, it will provide a fantastic facility in our community for our Vietnamese people to come together for celebrations and cultural days and will provide a permanent home for some of the Vietnamese social and community groups that operate in and around the Mirrabooka electorate. I am very excited to see this project develop right in the heart of the Mirrabooka electorate and I know that our Vietnamese community shares in that excitement.

At the Tet festival, we enjoyed amazing food, fireworks, lion dances and many cultural performances. The festivities went throughout the evening on both Friday and Saturday night. I was particularly happy to see so many of the local Girrawheen and Marangaroo residents—particularly those who are not Vietnamese—come along to join in all the fun. I hope this festival will continue to grow and be such a wonderful celebration in the heart of my electorate. I am very pleased that the McGowan Labor government is a major sponsor of this event through funding from the Office of Multicultural Interests, Healthway and Lotterywest. I want to take this opportunity to also thank

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Girrawheen Senior High School, especially Principal Barbara Newton, for hosting the festival on its school grounds. I want to also give a special shout-out to the Unity Dancers from Girrawheen Senior High School for their special performance on the first night. It was indeed a fantastic celebration.

It was not the only one, though, and people will be aware that we also celebrated with the Chung Wah Association, which held another highly successful festival on the streets of Northbridge to mark Lunar New Year. It was such a pleasure to join in the celebrations, along with Dr Ting Chen, the president of the Chung Wah Association, Deputy Premier Roger Cook, many other of my colleagues from this house and the other place, and many other community leaders to begin the celebrations for the Lunar New Year festival. Thousands of people joined the celebrations on the streets of Northbridge, enjoying the food, parades and colourful performances that ran throughout the afternoon and evening. I think it is wonderful that we have so many opportunities to have such colourful cultural celebrations to bring the community together and, importantly, to share cultures with others in a way that I think strengthens our social cohesion and builds a strong understanding and a more inclusive and tolerant society.

In Mirrabooka, we are lucky and get to celebrate many new years, so I often take the opportunity to renew my new year's resolutions, not once, not twice, but three times by this time of the year. They may or may not stick! Just before Christmas, we also celebrated the 2 762nd Karen New Year.

Mr W.J. Johnston: One of my favourites.

Ms M.J. HAMMAT: Members of the Karen community celebrated their new year on 22 December and held a very big community celebration at the Herb Graham Centre in Mirrabooka. The community very much enjoyed being able to come together this year, as it was unable to do so last year due to COVID. For the Karen people, Karen New Year is one of the major holidays, celebrated right around the globe. It is one of their major celebrations and a public holiday in their home country. In Mirrabooka, we welcomed the new year with much dancing, singing and speeches and by enjoying the traditional Karen food. I want to take this opportunity to thank Joansy King, the chairperson of the Karen Welfare Association, for organising this important celebration. The event was attended by several hundred people from right around the Perth area. The Karen Welfare Association also held celebrations in regional areas, including Katanning and Albany, in recognition of the significant number of Karen people who live in those regional areas.

[Leave granted for the member's speech to be continued at a later sitting.]

Debate thus adjourned.

House adjourned at 7.00 pm
