

Hon Jackie Jarvis; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Colin De Grussa; Hon Sophia Moermond; Hon Steve Martin;
Hon Shelley Payne; Hon Rosie Sahanna; Hon Dr Sally Talbot; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Darren West

RURAL WOMEN

Motion

HON JACKIE JARVIS (South West) [1.06 pm]: I move —

That this house —

- (a) notes that 15 October 2022 is the United Nations International Day of Rural Women, a day when we recognise the contribution of rural women to the economic development of regional Western Australia as a vital labour force performing both paid and unpaid work; and
- (b) acknowledges the crucial role that women play in ensuring the sustainability of Western Australia's rural, regional and remote communities, and primary industries, including mining, agricultural production, fishing, food security, land and natural resource management, and in building climate resilience.

President, I would like to acknowledge some guests of mine who are in the President's gallery with your permission. We have representatives from the Rural, Regional, Remote Women's Network of Western Australia and the Country Women's Association of Western Australia. I welcome them.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon JACKIE JARVIS: The United Nations has set 15 October as the International Day of Rural Women. It is all about working towards achieving gender equity and empowering rural women. Rural women across the world are critical in the fight against global poverty, hunger and malnutrition. The United Nations estimates that if women were given the same opportunities as men in agricultural production across the world, we could increase agricultural production in the world's poorest regions by four per cent and reduce the number of malnourished people globally by around 17 per cent. We know that in many places in the world women still face discrimination in the ownership of land and livestock. We know that women in both developed and developing nations still face discrimination in achieving pay equity. We also know that there is an ongoing disparity in participation in decision-making in a lot of rural communities and that women across the world have less access to resources for credit to start up businesses and even to markets for agricultural and regional products.

In recent times, we have seen the devastation that is being caused by the war in Ukraine, which is not only having a devastating impact on the women of Ukraine who are trying to feed their families and look after their communities in a war-torn country, but also causing global disruption to food and energy markets. These types of situations intensify gender disparities. Much of the world, including Australia to a lesser extent, has struggled with the disruption to oil and gas supplies and access to stable food commodities such as grain. We know that Ukraine and the Black Sea region is a major supplier of wheat and other grain products that help to feed the poorest nations. Although Western Australian farmers will probably benefit from increased grain prices, it means that the poorest countries generally miss out when there is an undersupply of certain commodities. It is obviously the women of the world who carry much of the burden when there is an undersupply of food products.

There is a cost-of-living crisis in Australia and in the rest of the world. Again, we know that rural women across regional Western Australia generally still do most of the unpaid domestic and caring duties. Women also account for a large proportion of the agricultural workforce. That work is often unpaid and under-recognised. We of course live in a nation where Indigenous women have over 50 000 years of experience managing and caring for country in addition to the usual caring responsibilities that all women across the world and across generations deal with.

Those are my notes. I am going to speak of the cuff for the next 15 minutes because I have some relevant experience, having lived in regional WA since the early 1990s.

I thought it was important to have members of representative groups in the President's gallery today. I want to highlight that undervaluing of women who do a lot of the domestic but also agricultural work and who also carry the burden of keeping rural communities together. The Office for Women did a survey a few years ago that found most volunteering in regional WA is also done by women. It is women who keep the school boards, the P&Cs and the sports clubs going in our communities. It is women who are the volunteer ambulance officers and who are having an increasing role in emergency services when we have bushfires and other natural disasters. It is women who keep communities together.

I am thrilled to have representatives from two different organisations present today. For a long time, people have thought of the Country Women's Association, which everyone would have heard about, as that bastion of "domestic goddessness", before that was the thing. The CWA is much more than that. In the early 2000s, around 2006, I was involved in a national rural women's coalition. I travelled to Canberra where we were meeting with government. We met with the Liberal-National coalition government in 2006 and then again with the new, incoming

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federal Labor government after the 2007 election. I remember meeting for the first time this amazing cohort of different women. I remember meeting a lady representing the CWA at a national level. She looked like what we would think of as a CWA woman, an older lady from a regional town, but she spoke with such elegance about how Australia was rolling out our telecommunications network. She spoke about the need for us to look at 5G networks instead of 3G. I remind members that this was in 2006. This woman had done lots of research because she was worried we were going down the path of introducing 3G in regional Australia when we should be going for 5G. It was a lightbulb moment for me. I realised that the CWA is indeed more than just tea and scones; it is a major advocacy group across Australia.

Another thing that is somewhat unique about the CWA is that it is one of the few organisations across regional Australia that actually has a physical presence in many towns. Anyone who has travelled across regional Western Australia would know that many towns have a CWA hall. That CWA hall is used for lots of purposes, but it is also a physical reminder of an organisation that lives and breathes in the regions. It is a powerful organisation and I am so glad to have the state president and the state CEO here today.

The new generation of regional women is also represented by the Rural, Regional, Remote Women's Network of Western Australia. It has been around for more than 20 years. It started life as a ministerial advisory panel, dare I suggest, back in the day when it probably was not envisaged that we might have a female Minister for Regional Development or Agriculture and Food. There was a thought that women might be needed to advise said male ministers on what women in regional WA were thinking. We have clearly moved on a lot from there. The RRR Network has assumed the mantle of connecting women who perhaps are not physically connected. The RRR Network has definitely moved into that online space, working out how we can connect women and bring them together when they cannot physically meet. Those skills were of course vital when the COVID pandemic hit and a lot of things moved online. I would like to say that the RRR Network probably led the charge on that well before we saw the need with COVID.

I spoke about how a lot of the agricultural workforce is unpaid and undervalued. I want to speak about a concept called the "invisible farmer". In the late 1800s an overly officious bureaucrat decided that we would not count women's labour in agriculture and mining industries in Australia. That was because we were a new nation in the late 1800s and it was thought that if our census data showed that women were doing manual labour, mother England might look at us as some sort of second class developing nation. We did not want to admit that a lot of our agricultural workforce and indeed our mining workforce, back in the goldmining days, were women. This concept grew of the idea of the invisible farmer, and women were simply not counted. This pervaded right through until the mid-1990s, when a lot of government record keeping across different states, which changed at different times, was not counting women as farmers. They were actually putting them down as "domestics". There was a time when if a woman put on a census form that she was a farmer, it would be changed to say that she was doing domestic duties or the term "farm helpmate" was used. A woman could not be doing those occupations in her own right.

The Victorian government has led a charge and Museums Victoria has a project called the Invisible Farmer. It is looking to right the wrongs of the past. It has been gathering stories for a number of years to gather data and stories. People have been submitting stories and oral histories about their life on the land. It has been running projects with people and showing photos of women working in agriculture generations ago. I remind members that this was a concerted effort of governments to hide the value that women were adding to regional industries.

We know of course that we have a strong mining sector in Western Australia and that it is a male dominated industry. We have seen some of the impact of that in the recent inquiries into sexual harassment in that sector. I know that mining companies are trying to elevate the role of women in those organisations to get more women onboard, but I suggest that they need to go further to bring more women into the sector.

One of the things I note living in a regional community is the number of women who are essentially locked out of the workforce by virtue of our reliance on fly-in fly-out workers. I do not think that was a deliberate intent of the companies that first developed this FIFO model. But what I see, particularly where I live in the south west, is around 27 flights a week going out of Busselton Margaret River Airport to service mining communities. It is generally a male workforce who are going to these sites. That leaves behind women who are then the primary carer of their children for two weeks at a time while their spouses work. Of course in some cases the role is reversed and we might see dad at home, but increasingly I see women locked out of professional opportunities or unable to fulfil their full career potential or perhaps their full career training because they are locked into this community in which their husbands are away for half the year. It also then locks them out of some volunteering opportunities. It can lock them out of those opportunities to expand in lots of ways and help the community. It is nobody's fault per se, it is just a reality. As a community we need to get better at understanding the role of good child care that does not just occur between standard office hours. We need to make sure that we have more women engaged in those regional communities working and volunteering.

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It has been apparent as well that our FIFO sector unfortunately seems to lead to an increase in family and domestic violence, which continues to be a scourge across urban and rural areas. I had the opportunity last year to tour a number of police stations in my electorate. At one of the police stations a sergeant said to me that they know about the mining swings and which companies are flying back and forth because they see the escalation in domestic violence. I want members to think about what picture they have in their head when we talk about domestic violence in a regional or rural setting. That comment was made in Dunsborough. As we know, Dunsborough is a beautiful place to live. It has coast and natural bushland. The houses are nice and the families who live there are middle class and earn good incomes from predominantly the mining sector, yet the police sergeant there told me that they know when the flights are coming back into Dunsborough because of the family and domestic violence in that town. I think that we as members of the Western Australian community need to ask ourselves: why is this happening?

The mining industry relies on workers coming and going. We know that adds enormous family pressure to both the parent left behind and the parent coming back. I think it is beholden on us as a sector and a community to work out how we can do more to address this situation, because, as I said, whatever picture we have in our head of domestic violence in a regional setting, we probably would not think of a lovely tourist town like Dunsborough, with its bakery and yoga studios. But if we are going to fully engage women, and there is an economic imperative to make sure that we do, we need to address these issues that are preventing families from living up to their full potential.

I believe we have a number of speakers today, so I will not use my full 20 minutes, but I want to acknowledge that 15 October will be the United Nations International Day of Rural Women. With that, I will pass over to my colleagues. Thank you.

HON ALANNAH MacTIERNAN (South West — Minister for Regional Development) [1.20 pm]: I thank Hon Jackie Jarvis for bringing forward this motion and making sure that we are all aware of this United Nations International Day of Rural Women, and that it is used to acknowledge the work of women in rural Western Australia. I, too, acknowledge the guests from the Rural, Regional, Remote Women's Network of WA and the Country Women's Association, who are the spear carriers here for Hon Jackie Jarvis's fabulous motion.

I want to talk about a bit of a celebration, because I think what has been achieved and what I see happening in Western Australia is truly fantastic. I think a lot of progress has been made. It is interesting that since the very early days of European settlement in this country—Hon Rosie Sahanna will talk more broadly about other issues—there absolutely has been a recognition that women have been of critical importance. All the tropes of colonial life—*The Drover's Wife*, the poetry, the paintings—recognise the role that women played. Those early settlers could not possibly have done what was done without that work. Of course, in relation to the role of Aboriginal women particularly in pre-colonial times, I think it was really only around the 1970s that people came to globally understand how much of the community's food and sustenance was actually the result of women's labour, but, certainly in the non-Aboriginal settlement of this land, it was very clear that women had an important role. It could not have been done without them. Of course, that did not necessarily translate into power and proper recognition.

I want to make a couple of comments. I think that when those settlers left those traditional societies with traditional roles and came to a land that was new to them, it gave women an opportunity to do things that they did not have back in the more fossilised structures. We have heard just extraordinary stories of women who effectively ran major businesses, such as Elizabeth Macarthur, for example, who was the one who actually ran the merino farm. Those women went out and opened up pubs and boarding houses and, as Hon Jackie Jarvis said, they worked as the labour force for much of the agricultural endeavour. One of the reasons that women in New Zealand, then South Australia, then Western Australia and then Australia got the vote—often many decades before women in Europe or North America—was that the role women played was incredibly obvious to everyone. Women were given the right to vote a lot earlier because there was an overwhelming case for acknowledging that they had been given so much responsibility. It is true to say that for many, many subsequent decades there was still a mentality that ladies would bring a plate. However, as I said, no-one ever underestimated that women were incredibly important and that the whole agricultural enterprise could not have been done without them.

In the last six years that I have been in this portfolio in particular, I have seen a very significant difference in the relationship with grower groups and farmers. When I meet them, the women are right there at the decision-making table. I think there has been an enormous change in the decision-making processes that are going on in farm businesses, particularly among the younger generations. It may be that farm businesses have become so complex that they need all the talent they can get, but we are seeing all these extraordinary women—a number of them are here with us today—who are very much part of that. Although, as Hon Jackie Jarvis has quite rightly said, the vast majority of the domestic duties probably fall to women, nevertheless, women are the decision-makers who often come to these grower group decision-making forums. When I went back to those communities after being out of state politics for seven years or so, I saw a different picture and thought that there had been quite a transformation.

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I must say that I was surprised when I started getting nominations for a lot of our committees, particularly those that were industry based, because, overwhelmingly, gentlemen were being put forward. When I questioned this, I was told that there were either no women in the industry or women who were interested. I said, “It seems to me to be very odd. Where are you advertising—*Playboy* or something?” I found out that 100 per cent of the nominations committee of one group comprised men, and I said, “Perhaps that might have something to do with it.”

I want to acknowledge Elizabeth Brennan, who is with us today. She is one of the first women I put on the Industry Funding Scheme Appointments Committee. We are gradually making changes. There is no shortage of fantastic women to put on these boards to see that change take place. We often come across fantastic, dynamic young farming women and suggest that they put themselves forward, and we have seen a lot of amazing women come through the ranks. We see women taking chair positions. Even the Western Australian Meat Industry Authority is now chaired by Dongara farmer Sally O’Brien, and the Soil and Land Conservation Council is chaired by Hayley Norman. There are many more women on boards right across the portfolio and, I would have to say, right across government. As I said, what I was seeing on the ground in terms of the engagement of women in the industry had not yet been translated to those boards. Often, board appointments were perhaps seen as a reward for years or decades of service in agripolitics or industry bodies. Although I am not in any way demeaning that, it is important that we get that diversity and capture that talent and energy on these institutions, so this great capacity that we have in our rural women is translated into our decision-making bodies.

Hon Jackie Jarvis talked about history. History never ends and there is always work to do. I share the concern about child care, and I think that we need to find creative solutions for the provision of child care, particularly in smaller communities. Enabling women to participate is really important, and we have been working on a number of different options. With the Shire of Shark Bay, we invested in an in-situ family day care structure. When we went to open this structure, it was fantastic. The day care was able to take around seven children full time and a few more for after-school care. A number of women who turned up at the opening said that just having child care available, even for two or three days a week, changed their ability to participate in the economy and in their family business. We have invested in other programs, and Hon Simone McGurk is overseeing a program, but this body of work is not finished. We, of course, must remain constantly vigilant to make sure that we root out all the excellent women out there and give them an opportunity to thrive. Certainly, in agriculture and in our department we are seeing many leadership positions now filled by women of extraordinary capability and recognition within the industry.

Thank you very much, Hon Jackie Jarvis, and let us all celebrate the International Day of Rural Women.

HON COLIN de GRUSSA (Agricultural — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [1.33 pm]: I rise to support this motion on behalf of the opposition. It is an excellent motion and certainly one that the opposition has no problem at all supporting. I also acknowledge the guests from the Rural, Regional, Remote Women’s Network and the Country Women’s Association who are in the President’s gallery. Thank you very much for coming along and thank you for the work that your organisations do, in rural Western Australia in particular, for not only our women, but also all members of our communities in regional WA. We very much appreciate it.

As I have said a number of times before in this place, I am the proud father of a bunch of girls and a proud dad in an all-girl household, including the cat and the dog! I am certainly surrounded by women in my family life and have been in my life on the farm as well. My sister is still farming down in Esperance and is actively involved in the community as well as volunteering in the ambulance service down there. It has been a really eye-opening time, watching as more and more women have become much more engaged with the agricultural industry over the years. I think the minister made a good point when she said—this has certainly been my observation—that from the 1980s until now, a heck of a lot of women have been involved in agriculture and agribusiness in general, but they were not really up there at the leadership level, and I think that has been a critical problem. It seems to be something that the minister has worked hard to address, and I think that is a great outcome for agriculture, because the talent that is out there amongst our regional women needs to be utilised to its best.

The minister also talked about history. If we look at what our farmers were doing in the 1950s and 60s down in the Esperance region, for example, we see that they were still clearing and developing that land. That was tough work, absolutely. The blokes were out there on their tractors with chains and so on, clearing all that country, but we can also imagine the life of someone like my mum, who was a ten-pound Pom. She came out from East London and found herself living in a shed in the middle of a sandpit, essentially, down in Esperance, most of the time on her own. That was the story for so many women back in those days. They really did do it a lot tougher than I think has ever been recognised, in the fact that they were out there for a lot of time on their own, with almost no communications. They might have had the old party line back then, when the phones worked, but no power. But they did that. Many of those women had families, but many also moved on to be very active in the agricultural industry and in the communities down there. I think that is a tribute to the resilience, commitment and dedication of rural women in Australia. We need to celebrate that, and we absolutely need to acknowledge the United Nations International Day of Rural Women. They are the unsung heroes of our regional communities, in many respects. They put in so much

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tireless effort to support their families and to create change in the community, because they could see the things that needed to be improved back in the day.

I have already spoken about my mum and the other women in our district in particular; they saw the things that were missing that would make not only their lives better, but also those of their families, so they worked hard to make those things happen. Those women formed many groups. Back in the day, I think my mum was one of the early members of the Breastfeeding Association in that district. That was a fantastic group for remote mums to come together and talk to each other. Obviously, their conversations invariably went on to other things, not just about their kids. I also acknowledge the work of the Country Women's Association and the characteristics of that group, which has actually empowered rural women to achieve services that were missing in regional WA. For example, they worked to set up baby healthcare centres and bush nurses and to build and staff maternity wards, hospitals, schools and rest homes. They provided food and clothing and raised funds to help those in need, and advocated for the facilities that were missing in some of those communities. The CWA has been a community change maker in Western Australia for the last 100 years or so, and continues to be.

Our regional women are proactive, and the RRR Network is a great example of that. It is a great network; I cannot remember exactly when it was formed, but my good friend Marg Agnew was involved in it back in the day. It is a wonderful network, and it is great to see that it is continuing as strongly and vibrantly as it is. Six major issues for WA's regional women were recently identified by the network: the lack of career-building jobs for women, specifically professional leadership positions, which is often compounded by childcare difficulties and geographic isolation; the burden of volunteering and caring responsibilities, which are roles primarily fulfilled by women; the lack of essential women's health services in the regions; domestic violence and surrounding complications of reporting in small communities, due to their isolation; and sexual harassment and fixed expectations to accept such behaviours, with few to no effective reporting channels available. Hon Jackie Jarvis spoke at length about sexual harassment and it is a real problem, one which collectively we need to do far better at than we have thus far. Another concern is the regional-to-metropolitan transition for families when young people pursue opportunities for education or employment. These challenges were compounded during COVID-19 when even people in the metropolitan area perhaps experienced them for the first time ever, while those in the regions were aware of the issues.

Out of those challenges can often come opportunities. It was quite refreshing to see how well workplaces evolved to allow opportunities to work from home because of COVID-19 and how quickly we proved we could do it. Notwithstanding the technical difficulties that it presents in regional areas with communications issues, for example, the opportunity to work from home really opens up possibilities, particularly for regional women and those who are at home, and also for the blokes. If the women are out there, not working from home, it is an opportunity for the blokes of the world to work from home. I think we need to capture that opportunity.

Back in 2012, 10 years ago, a Grattan Institute report found that if an extra six per cent of women were employed in the workforce, that could add, at that time, an extra \$25 billion to Australia's GDP. That was 10 years ago. One can only imagine how high the figure would be now, particularly at a time when we are at what is really full employment. We need to find ways to allow the flexibility for more people to be engaged in the workforce. The constraints of geography can also be beaten by the opportunity to work from home, provided we have the infrastructure in place to allow for communications and the technical aspects we need.

I believe very strongly that we need more regional representation in public life—places like this. It is great to see so many rural women in this place, on the other side of the chamber. I think members on this side would agree we have to do better. That is something I am not proud of. In general, more women in Parliament and in leadership roles in public life can only be good for our communities, regardless of whether they are regional or metropolitan. We are getting there. Change is happening. It is sometimes slow and frustrating. I can only imagine how frustrating it is for some people. The International Day for Rural Women presents us with an opportunity to celebrate the achievements and dedication of regional women across Western Australia in agriculture and other industries. We are working towards better representation. There are countless examples of trailblazers out there in regional Western Australia. I mentioned earlier my good friend Marg Agnew. I have known Marg for most of my life. She farmed just up the road from us. Members can look at it two ways; if it was not for Marg Agnew, I would not be in this place. She was the one who really encouraged me to step up. Members can blame or thank her; I am not sure what side of the fence members will sit on! She is certainly an inspiration to me and my family. My dad worked very closely with Marg in our local Landcare group. The two of them really set up that group. She is a real power and I catch up with her quite regularly. The other rural woman I want to thank for me putting up my hand to have a crack at becoming an MP is a former member of this place, Hon Wendy Duncan. She is another great rural woman and advocate for regional Western Australia and the women of regional Western Australia.

I also acknowledge the 2021 Rural Woman of the Year, Cara Peek; Kendall Whyte, who started the now global campaign, the Blue Tree Project; and Fleur McDonald—someone I know well from Esperance—who has authored over 16 books and established DVassist, formerly called Breaking the Silence. DVassist is a not-for-profit that

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set up an online directory of domestic violence services in regional areas of WA and recently launched a phone counselling service. I think it is fantastic to see those sorts of services being established. When the need is there, there are some powerful people coming forward with those great ideas.

Another Esperance local is Gail Reynolds-Adamson, who really is a very strong leader in the community down there. She is chair of the Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation and the managing director of her own successful traditional owner cultural consultancy business. She is a previous chair of the Goldfields–Esperance Development Commission, a board member for Horizon Power and an advocate for Indigenous tourism. She is a key advocate for First Nations people in native title, health and education and in facilitating a broader discussion on reconciliation. Gail is a shining example of a passionate wonderful rural woman who really is doing absolutely fantastic things for the community down there and for reconciliation.

Sue Middleton from Wongan Hills developed the Moora Citrus brand and was appointed to the board of the National Water Grid Advisory Body. She is also a passionate advocate for agriculture and regional development.

There are many rural women standing up and leading the way in making a difference in their communities. As I said before, it is great to see so many of those leaders from regional WA, leading women, in this place. We are very fortunate in this state to see more and more people coming forward and stepping up, thankfully. But we need to do more. We need to make sure that we do all that we can to see more rural women come forward into positions of leadership and into parliamentary representation. That would be a fantastic outcome for Western Australia.

The women in our lives deserve recognition for their commitment, strength, passion and brilliance. We should do all we can to support rural women to be the change makers they can be in their communities and to have more representation on all sides of the political spectrum so that they can all advocate for better outcomes for regional Western Australia. On 15 October, the International Day of Rural Women, let us take a moment to say thank you to those women who are driving our state and are the backbone of our communities. Let us support those women who support us with tenacity and grace. I thank Hon Jackie Jarvis for bringing this motion before the house today for us to debate.

HON SOPHIA MOERMOND (South West) [1.47 pm]: I would like to thank Hon Jackie Jarvis for putting forward this motion. Some of what I will say has been covered already in this chamber. There are many things that can be said about the role of women in rural areas; there is the physical labour, but also the mental and emotional labour, which is largely unpaid labour that women have to carry. Women are involved in care, planning and logistics under, no doubt, some very trying circumstances out there.

When I first moved to Australia, we used the Country Women’s Association cookbook in our cooking classes in high school. It took me a while to figure out how much more than scones, albeit very good ones, the Country Women’s Association stood for. My first scones ever were from the CWA cookbook. The voice of the CWA is strong and clear these days, and has gone far beyond the creation of delectable baked goods. Its members are engaged politically, initiate petitions and participate in consciousness-raising and advocacy around rural issues.

One of the most important things that these women do is create community, which is absolutely vital for the creation of thriving rural communities, especially when geographic isolation is the norm in our very large state. In particular, I would like to thank them for that. Community is everything; it helps us carry the load that is life. When women get together, “magick” happens. Thank you.

HON STEVE MARTIN (Agricultural) [1.50 pm]: I rise to make a contribution to this excellent motion moved by Hon Jackie Jarvis, who, might I say, was a little modest in her contribution today. I believe that in 2014, Hon Jackie Jarvis won AgriFutures Rural Women’s Award for this state and was the national runner-up that same year. Congratulations to her for that and for bringing this excellent motion to this place.

We could spend all day making useful contributions on this motion; I will confine my remarks to give other members the opportunity to speak. I also welcome members of the Country Women’s Association and the Rural, Regional, Remote Women’s Network of Western Australia who are in the President’s gallery. As a new member of Parliament I was advised, “You can ignore the PGA, the mining lobbies, BHP and shire presidents, but never ever ignore the CWA”! I intend to follow that advice.

I would like to begin by making some personal reflections on the contribution that women have made to agriculture and regional Western Australia as someone who grew up on a farm and who is a former farmer. Hon Alannah MacTiernan, who is away on urgent parliamentary business, made the point that the profile of women in agriculture has been raised recently with recognition of their contribution, but for those of us living the life decades ago, that contribution had already been recognised very clearly. It is good that that recognition is more public, which is appropriate, but despite the fairly strict division of labour during those times, there was plenty of labour involved for both men and women on farms—there was simply no other option. Any marriage or partnership that can survive time spent together in a set of sheep yards is a strong and powerful marriage or partnership. I have seen that firsthand.

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I briefly want to touch on the contribution that many women have made in regional WA as educators and schoolteachers. Over the decades, the vast majority of these were young women who had been sent to very remote and tough locations early in their teaching career. I made mention in my inaugural speech in this place of my grandmother, who was sent to Lake Varley in 1930 for her first job as a teacher. She rode to Lake Varley, which would have been a task in itself. Such was the value of her position in that community that the family she stayed with in town gave her first use of the bath on bath night, which I also mentioned during my inaugural speech. Countless women like my grandmother Ethel would have done that. The role of bringing those communities together, especially in the early part of last century, was important, and I pay tribute to all those wonderful educators, particularly the women who braved those often difficult circumstances in the 1920s, 30s and 40s.

I would like to touch on a couple of women whom I have bumped into in my role as a farmer and member of this place who have done some outstanding work in raising the profile of agriculture with the broader public in this state. I do not think there has ever been a greater disconnect between the metropolitan area and what happens on the other side of the hill. I refer to Holly Ludeman, Milly Nolan, Kate Bishop and Bindi Murray from what was the Sheep Collective, which has morphed into the Livestock Collective. Their work has been extraordinary. For those members who are not aware, the Sheep Collective was born out of the crisis in the live export trade that followed after awful footage of an incident on board a ship was made public and the industry was shut down. These young women, amongst others, realised that work needed to be done to improve the transparency of that industry. They quickly realised that there was an issue after talking to metropolitan people about what happens in agriculture; there was a very low base of knowledge. They set about raising that profile. In particular, Holly Ludeman, who is a vet and scientist, has taken on the brunt of that work. She has been quite inspiring. I thank her very much for the work she has done in raising the profile of agriculture across this state.

Milly Nolan is a young woman who came to Western Australia from Victoria. She is only in her mid-20s. She was asked about being a woman in agriculture and her response was really inspiring and showed what the future looks like for people of her generation. From my notes, her response was —

I have just seen myself as in agriculture. Both men and women have empowered me to be part of the industry. I think the conversation should be: what can we achieve together?

People from my mother's generation would not have conceived that view of the world. It is wonderful that young Milly Nolan can see that as the future in agriculture, and I hope that is the case.

I will also touch briefly on an event last weekend. Hon Darren West and I travelled to Hyden—along with 700 locals and ex-locals—to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the district of Hyden. Over and over again we heard stories and saw displays on the role of women from the early years right up to today in the Hyden district. We saw on the day the number of women who ran the show. They had Brian Mayfield up front making a speech, but we all knew it was organised by the women in the room. There were some wonderful stories about how tough it was in Hyden 100 years ago when those families arrived. They are called family farms for a very good reason—the whole family is there. Mum, the kids and dad lobbied into Hyden 100 years ago! We heard many inspiring stories about the wonderful contribution those women made to pull that community together, and 100 years later they are still the drivers of that community. That was great to see. It reinforced something that we knew, but it was on clear display last week in Hyden—the women in regional Western Australia are doing the community building and keeping those small communities strong. In fact, the population of Hyden today is probably less than it was 90 to 100 years ago to be honest, so the work is harder. Communications are better, but the work of keeping those communities and those small schools running has got harder. I congratulate Hon Jackie Jarvis for moving this excellent motion and bringing International Day of Rural Women to our attention. On 15 October we will celebrate the contribution that women have made across the world and, in particular, in all those areas that are so important to rural and regional Western Australia.

HON SHELLEY PAYNE (Agricultural) [1.57 pm]: I thank Hon Jackie Jarvis for moving this motion today so that we can talk about the United Nations International Day of Rural Women, which is on Saturday. I will make a few comments today about the challenges we face as regional women. I want to reflect on the fact it is International Day of Rural Women and firstly say how lucky we are to live in Western Australia compared with some other countries and the challenges faced by some women around the world with poverty, a lack of access to good education and a lack of proper nourishing food for themselves and their families. I note the United Nations' push for gender equality and empowering women in the fight against poverty, hunger and malnutrition. I also note the comments Hon Jackie Jarvis made about giving women the same opportunities as men and how we can increase agricultural production and reduce the number of malnourished people in the world. Hon Jackie Jarvis also mentioned the global cost-of-living crisis at the moment and how this is impacting a lot of women in regional areas around the world.

Extract from Hansard

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Hon Shelley Payne; Hon Rosie Sahanna; Hon Dr Sally Talbot; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Darren West

I acknowledge the Country Women's Association and thank the RRR Network and the rural, regional and remote women who are here today. I also want to thank the McGowan government for its budget commitment to this group of \$250 000 over the next two years, with \$150 000 this financial year and \$100 000 next financial year. I thank the McGowan government for that. Hon Colin de Grussa touched on Marg Agnew and the RRR Network starting out as a ministerial advisory group. Marg Agnew is a farmer in Esperance who was instrumental in establishing the Rural, Regional, Remote Women's Network of Western Australia. She came over from Victoria. As a woman on a farm, not having much connection with other women, she wanted to reach out to other women in the same situation. After reading some magazines over east about rural women, she wanted to start up a similar newsletter. She curated the initial newsletter in 1996, and that led to her becoming the inaugural chair of the RRR Network.

I mention Marg Agnew because of the changes that have taken place over the last 25 years, since she first established the RRR Network. These changes—the use of social media and technology and the increased visibility of women—can be seen in many of the agriculture groups that are around now, such as the Association of Sheep Husbandry, Excellence, Evaluation and Production, and the South East Premium Wheatgrowers Association in Esperance. We have some great women, Sarah Brown and Michelle Handley, and they are doing an amazing job with the information that they are getting out on social media and the field days that they are coordinating for the farmers. It is a really fantastic effort.

We see many Women in Agribusiness events now. The Facey Group recently had its 2022 Women in Agriculture event, and the Women in Farming group, which has branches from Cranbrook and Boyup Brook to Varley and Kondinin, recently had its annual seminar, Find Your Voice, Find Your Passion. I want to acknowledge the Facey Group's work in supporting the recovery from the recent Narrogin fires, to which the McGowan government contributed some money, and the women there doing that great work.

Interestingly, I recently went to the Western Australian College of Agriculture at Narrogin for its open day. One-third of the students studying there are women, and that is trending upwards, which is really great to see. One of the students, Dakota Watts from Pumphreys Bridge, was the first girl ever to win the national title for under-14 steer riding. That is really fantastic.

The Rotary Club of Esperance has its sixtieth anniversary this year, and it now has its first female member, Corrina Rawlinson. After 60 years, it is great that the club now has its first woman. With Corrina's help the group has a great Facebook page and has posted its first selfie. The website is getting an upgrade and the group has also taken on a mental health role. These are the kinds of changes that come from bringing women into an organisation. I want to commend Corrina for taking the step of joining that group.

I want to quickly acknowledge the annual Western Australian Rural Women's Awards, which acknowledge the great work that our rural women do. Belinda Lay of Esperance won the award in 2019. She is a mixed grain and sheep farmer. Her vision is for Esperance to be the key technological area for farming in WA. She has made some great initiatives with her sheep. When she won the award, she got a \$10 000 grant to look at sheep collars and collect a lot of information about her animals for productivity and animal welfare. Nominations for the 2023 awards are open now, closing on 19 October. It is really important for us to celebrate the social, economic and community achievements of women, and this award provides an opportunity to promote women in leadership positions and help build their capacity.

Hon Jackie Jarvis talked about unpaid work, something her motion addresses. I also wanted to mention how much unpaid work women do. This is particularly the case for unpaid domestic work, which can average up to 15 hours a week. Unpaid care assistance to some of the most vulnerable members of our community is also primarily done by women, as is unpaid child care, particularly in the regions. Usually, this unpaid work is performed over and above our usual employment. As well as the unpaid work, there is volunteering; women statistically volunteer at higher rates than men. They contribute to regional communities and help build community capacity, sustain engagement and support local communities. I thank all the women out there. I am sure most of the women in the President's gallery also volunteer in their positions, so it is really fantastic to see.

I will just touch briefly on some of the challenges that we face as regional women that are not experienced by women who live in the Perth metropolitan area, such as limited access to community services, reduced access to health care, restricted opportunities for further education, and environmental hazards such as fires, flood and drought that we have to deal with in remote places away from the city. Despite these challenges, we have proven that we are dynamic, innovative, resourceful and resilient.

I want to give a shout-out to my colleagues. We have many women in this house and the other house who are in regional locations. We have Rebecca Stephens in Albany; Ali Kent in Kalgoorlie; Hon Jackie Jarvis, Hon Alannah MacTiernan and Hon Dr Sally Talbot, who represent the South West Region; my colleague Hon Sandra Carr who represents the Agricultural Region; and Hon Rosie Sahanna in the Mining and Pastoral Region as the first Indigenous woman in this house, which is fantastic. This government is really doing well. I think having these

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women in the regions is really helping. I find it great that women have someone whom they can connect with, rather than a male member of Parliament, as traditionally has been the case. It is great we have so many women. I know my colleague Hon Sandra Carr is going to be speaking at an RRR Network event, so that is really great. Another event is coming up that I did not mention. Lara Dalton, who is also in Geraldton, will speak at an RRR Network event in Geraldton. It is fantastic that we have these women who have a direct force to Parliament and can engage with women in the regions.

I want to mention some of the things the government is doing for women of which I am really proud: free mammogram screenings for all women; free period products that we have just announced for women in public high schools; and recent announcements about separating de facto couples being able to split their superannuation. We have just seen the report and we will rewrite the Equal Opportunity Act.

We have also given a funding boost of \$3 million for initiatives that prevent domestic violence. We sadly know that domestic violence is a major problem in WA, particularly in remote communities. We have invested more than \$150 million in new family and domestic violence funding since 2017. Another thing is early childhood education and care services, which are really important not only for children's socialisation, but also supporting us as parents to get back to work. There are challenges with providing childcare services in the regions. I am pleased we have committed \$5.1 million to a range of initiatives to improve access to early child education for regional families.

Telecommunications is also really important, especially for rural women who are stay-at-home mums who want access to good telecommunications so that they can initiate their own businesses. This is a commonwealth responsibility but we are being held back by a lack of digital connectivity, so I am really pleased that the McGowan government has committed more than \$50 million over the past five years to bridge the digital divide in regional WA. I know it is not perfect and it is not a state government responsibility, but I am really pleased that the government is doing a lot to help support and improve our digital infrastructure.

Another thing I want to mention is our 2020 release of *Stronger together: WA's plan for gender equality*. I acknowledge the RRR Network, which helped out with some of the consultation that went towards getting that plan together.

In closing, I want to thank Hon Jackie Jarvis for bringing this motion before us today and acknowledge and recognise the valuable influence that regional, rural and remote women make to our state and our economy through their contributions.

HON ROSIE SAHANNA (Mining and Pastoral) [2.09 pm]: I thank Hon Jackie Jarvis for bringing this motion to the house. I really appreciated her talk on Indigenous women and I will talk more on that later. In the past, it has been predominantly men who have been the contributors to primary industry, but women are now taking charge in leading the development and management of industries in the areas of mining, agriculture and natural resource management. The number of women employed in the mining industry nationally has increased by more than 400 per cent over the last 20 years, with more than 800 women commencing apprenticeships and traineeships in the metals, mining, manufacturing and service industries in the last 12 months in Western Australia. As an Aboriginal woman, it has been a really big thing for me in my role to empower all the young women in the Kimberley region and most of WA to take the lead. A big change is happening where I come from. We have always been dominated by men, but a lot of young women are now talking about and taking the lead on issues. In an Aboriginal context, women are the backbone of society. They are the figure that keeps family together. They nurture, they cook and they look after the men—they do all that work. I come from a background in which my mum's job was in the kitchen. She would sew clothes, cook and make sure that we had clean clothes and went to school. She is just one of many women in her generation who did that and we underestimate the role that they played in getting us to where we are today. We are who we are today because of those women. They played a big role. In my culture, a woman really is the main person.

I take this opportunity to also acknowledge Aboriginal women in the Kimberley who have really contributed to the regional and rural communities. First, I will talk about Cara Peek. Thank you, Hon Colin de Grussa, for mentioning her. I thought that you had stolen my line, but I will repeat it. Cara is a Yawuru woman from Broome. She won the Western Australian AgriFutures Rural Women's Award in 2020 in recognition of her rural youth community work and ongoing commitment to the economic development of the Kimberley. Darrylin Gordon won the WA AgriFutures Rural Women's Award in 2018 and was the national runner-up. She is also a Kimberley woman who is Jaru and comes from Halls Creek. Other women in the Kimberley are having a really big impact today in empowering young women and taking up a leadership role. One of these women is Natasha Short. She uses her business or social enterprise called Kimberley Jiyigas—birds—to influence social change in the Kimberley region. Her group of Jiyigas advisers is made up of Kimberley Indigenous women who are in business and want to empower young women. I really wanted to mention her. The other woman is Eunice Yu who was inducted into the WA Women's Hall of Fame in March this year for her dedication and tireless volunteer work. She is always volunteering in sport and

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other areas—everywhere you go in Broome, Eunice is there. Those few ladies who I have mentioned really do a lot in the Kimberley today.

Hon Jackie Jarvis also mentioned unpaid work. In the Kimberley, the term we use is “stolen wages”. Back in the day, Indigenous women would work for rations—bread, flour, whatever it was—but they never got paid. Stolen wages is a big thing. Those women actually lived through that and they managed to feed and nurture their family. They managed to carry out all their family roles with very little.

Another lady I would like to mention is Lexie Trancollino, who is also from Halls Creek. She is a breast cancer patient who has been a public servant for most of her life and is looking at retiring, but in between her job, she started a business with her partner to create employment for young people in Halls Creek. We really do have a great number of women who are doing a lot of good things.

I would also like to focus on and acknowledge the Country Women’s Association. When I was growing up, Broome had a CWA. I do not know if the ladies in the gallery have been to Broome, but the CWA hall used to be where the car park is now at Town Beach. We would visit after we had been swimming. We would pull in there and there was always cold water or sandwiches there for us, so thank you. When I was growing up, the CWA played a big role in volunteering in everything, so I want to thank the CWA very much. I would also like to acknowledge the Rural, Regional, Remote Women’s Network. I am a bit like Hon Shelley Payne because I get tongue-tied trying to say the three words all at once. I thank them all for their hard work in lifting the profile of women.

I also want to thank Hon Jackie Jarvis for this motion. She did not mention her own achievements, so I thank Hon Colin de Grussa for mentioning them. I want to congratulate Hon Jackie Jarvis, even though she is one of those quiet achievers and I guess she does not want to put herself out there. I thank Hon Colin de Grussa for acknowledging that.

There are so many inspirational women right across WA. Whether they are in rural, remote or metropolitan areas, so many women are doing so many good things. Times have changed now; there seems to have been a massive change in women’s leadership and women taking the lead role in all aspects of employment. That never happened before my lifetime. We are not second-class citizens anymore; we are actually the breadwinners and decision-makers, and all that. It is people like the women in the gallery who made it happen, and I thank them.

I also want to thank Hon Shelley Payne and all the speakers so far. Hon Alannah MacTiernan said a lot of really great things. Hon Colin de Grussa comes from a rural background and he certainly said a lot of things that I have noted here, but it would be useless for me to repeat them as everybody would have heard all of that.

I was really honoured to be one of the key speakers at the Women’s Leadership Forum held in Broome earlier this year. I was in the company of great inspirational women. The line-up of speakers was outstanding. There were so many inspirational women in leadership roles—women who have taken charge in their chosen fields and are making a difference every day. One such woman is Jane Sale, who manages one of the largest pastoral companies in the Kimberley and created the Central Station website, which was designed to link other rural women who live and work on some of Australia’s most remote cattle stations. Honestly, her speech was fantastic. As I said, the line-up of women there was amazing.

I would like to end by thanking all women—from the past, present and into the future. All women who work in previously male-dominated industries deserve to know that their commitment is acknowledged and appreciated. As we approach International Day of Rural Women, let us celebrate the gains made towards gender equality across all industries and recognise the strong, courageous women who are creating opportunities for themselves and other women in regional communities. Thank you.

Visitors — Hillarys Primary School

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Peter Foster): Members, before I put the question again, I just want to acknowledge that we have some guests in the gallery. I hope I get this correct; I believe we have some year 6 students from Hillarys Primary School. I welcome them to the Legislative Council and hope that they learn lots here with us today. Welcome.

Debate Resumed

HON DR SALLY TALBOT (South West) [2.20 pm]: I am glad to have the opportunity to speak on this motion by Hon Jackie Jarvis. I want to pick up on something Hon Rosie Sahanna said, which I thought absolutely nailed it, and in a sense, we could stop right here. She said that in this motion today we are celebrating that women are not just the people who support the men in regional and rural communities, but the decision-makers in those communities. That tone is exactly the right one that we have to strike in 2022 when we talk about the role of women in our society, not just as supporters. Women are now the decision-makers in their communities. In my comments today I will touch on a few areas, most of which have been covered to some extent in what other members have said, but I will perhaps provide a different aspect to some of those things.

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I suppose we have to start with the question: why do we particularly need a United Nations International Day of Rural Women? After all, every report, every study and every debate that has ever been had on this subject starts off by pointing out that the problems that affect regional and rural women are exactly the same as the problems that affect women in towns and cities. That is true and I think we would all acknowledge that. However, whenever I engage in this kind of discussion I am always reminded of that marvellous observation about Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire; that they were both exceptionally talented dancers, but that Ginger did it all backwards and in high heels! That is really my starting point in discussing this topic. Rural and regional women face all the same challenges that women all over the world face, but they do it backwards and in high heels.

I note at the outset that today Hon Jackie Jarvis has given us the opportunity to put a uniquely Western Australian slant on this question of who exactly rural and regional women are and what they contribute to the economy and to community life in Western Australia. We can talk specifically from a Western Australian perspective. After all, the day on Saturday will be celebrated around the world, including in Third World countries where many of the challenges that women face are different from some of the challenges we face. I remember attending an International Women's Day event some years ago and listening to speakers from Third World economies talk about the benefits to be accrued from microfinancing. Women who want to start endeavours, particularly in Third World countries, often need small amounts of money just to make small changes, but those small changes can have ripples that go out for miles and miles around them to improve people's lives. One of the things they talked about was putting locks and lights in the women's toilets at the marketplace. As soon as the women's toilets had locks on the doors and were well lit, the women did not have to leave their market stalls to take their children to the loo because they could now go to the loo safely. Think about what a difference that makes to people's lives. Those women were losing a big component of their day having to care for children and because of locks on the doors and lights in the toilets, they were able to focus on other things. Sometimes the small changes can make the big differences.

We are here today to consider some of these issues from a uniquely Western Australian perspective. When I address this topic in a moment, I will go through a few things that occurred to me. I am pleased to speak today because it gives me the opportunity to note particularly the contribution of Hon Jackie Jarvis. We have heard today from a number of different speakers and there is no doubt that all the women on my side of the chamber, from my side of politics, have a unique and inestimable value that they contribute to this place. Hon Jackie Jarvis has a history that she does not talk about as a voice for rural and regional women. As other speakers mentioned, she did indeed clean up in 2014 with the Rural Women's Award in Western Australia, but she has also dedicated a large part of her life to listening to those voices from regional and rural women and bringing those voices to government. She has done that in her role with the Rural, Regional, Remote Women's Network of WA and as a public servant.

When we come into this place, it is all those different perspectives and skills that make us what we are, as a Parliament and as a government. The whole is greater than the parts, but some of those parts are particularly noteworthy. I want to say to Hon Jackie Jarvis that it is a great honour to be working with her as a fellow member for the South West Region. Of course, our third musketeer is Hon Alannah MacTiernan, who is a force to be reckoned with in every conceivable sense of that expression. She is also a powerhouse for driving the issues that need to be resolved for rural and regional women. That is only a small part of the South West Region team, which now consists of a majority of women. We have Rebecca Stephens in Albany, Jane Kelsbie in Warren–Blackwood and Jodie Hanns in Collie–Preston.

When I was first elected, there were not that many of us, and I spent many years of my professional life in politics being the only woman in the room. It is exactly the same in politics as it is in agriculture and in much of life in the regions: 10 or 20 years ago, I was often the only woman in the room. Every time the men swore, they would look at me and apologise. Nothing got up my nose more than that. I have the vocabulary of a bullock train driver; I do not need men to apologise to me when they swear. Anyway, that seemed to be something that made them feel better. Nowadays, I look around our party room, and we are a genuinely inclusive party. I am very proud of that. We have Rebecca and Jane down in the great southern, Jodie Hanns in Collie–Preston, and Robyn Clarke and Lisa Munday in the south west. I have to say also, of course, the sixth female member of the eight lower house seats down there is Libby Mettam, who is in the other place for the other party.

It is a formidable team. I want to say that I am very proud to be a part of that team, especially because of the measures that the McGowan Labor government has taken to put some genuine clout in the drive towards equality. We have done that largely through the work of Hon Simone McGurk, the Minister for Community Services; Women's Interests, who sits in the other place. A couple of the previous speakers have referred to the *Stronger together: WA's plan for gender equality* strategy, which the state is now working towards. It is a very impressive strategy.

I want to come back to the work that Hon Jackie Jarvis did in 2019, which was after she was the CEO of the RRR Network.

Hon Jackie Jarvis: At the tail end of it, I think.

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Hon Dr SALLY TALBOT: It was at the tail end of the time. In 2019, Hon Jackie Jarvis and Kendall Galbraith, who is in the gallery today and is the current CEO of the RRR Network, put together *Women's voices regional report: August 2019*. Anybody who has not had a look at it or perhaps read it when it came out and has not looked at it lately should refresh their minds about what is in that report. Much of the content of the regional voices report went on to become the substance of the Stronger Together state policy.

I want to go through a few things that came out of the regional voices report. It is an extraordinary piece of work, very thorough and the best empirical research. Jackie and Kendall went out, talked to people and listened. That is what it is all about, is not it: listening to people?

They met with a total of nearly 150 women statewide. They held forums in every corner of the state. Listen to the conclusion. The conclusion was that all the problems, issues and challenges that rural women face stem from one unifying factor: isolation. In one sense, that is stating the obvious. We need to think very carefully about what that isolation results in, because only when we understand that will we be able to talk about ways of overcoming that isolation. They identified the following things: daily and monotonous long distance travel; little to no childcare options, including flexible arrangements; overwhelming sexist attitudes; untapped skills; lack of jobs; and social complications for reporting of domestic violence and sexual harassment in small communities. As they said, these are all issues that continue to drive a wedge in achieving gender equality. As I have said, many of those issues also affect women who live in metropolitan areas. However, we cannot shy away from the fact that that isolation causes special problems.

I want to refer now to an earlier paper. It is dated 2015 and is from the Australian Institute of Family Studies. That paper looks particularly at domestic and family violence in regional, rural and remote communities. It is very interesting to look at the overlap between the *Women's voices regional report: August 2019* and what is identified in that 2015 paper. I do not hesitate to put forward the view that none of this has changed. Therefore, although we are working towards change, we need to keep talking about it, because unless we keep it front and centre of our discussion, nothing will change. That 2015 paper is Australia-wide, so we have to extrapolate the Western Australian data. The report states —

The ABS' Personal Safety Survey (2013) showed that 21% of women living outside of capital cities had experienced violence from an intimate partner since the age of 15 (compared to 15% of women living in a capital city).

That is an outrageous and extremely distressing statistic. As I said, I do not think we can put our hand on our heart and say that situation has changed in recent years. That Australian Institute of Family Studies paper dissects a number of different elements. I recommend that people read that paper, and I am happy to give them the reference if they are interested. It is only a short paper, but it captures all the data. The paper refers to how family violence is propagated, seeded and embedded in the social norms and structures of regional, remote and rural communities. The paper also refers to rural masculinity. We have talked a bit in this debate about the stereotypical settlers' picture of men. The paper states that masculinity in rural areas is often constructed in a way that privileges strength, courage and domination.

I urge members to read the marvellous book by Jess Hill, *See what you made me do*. That book is a complete game-changer for the Western Australian debate about domestic abuse. If anybody sitting in this Parliament has not read that book, they must read it in the next few weeks, because it will change the way that they see this. Even if members regard themselves as fully informed when it comes to some of these challenges that we have to address, Jess Hill's book encapsulates it in a very succinct way.

The paper from the Australian Institute of Family Studies also talks about self-reliance and privacy, and the culture of being brave, standing on your own and not sharing your dirty washing. I had a friend years ago when I was at university who took advantage of the Whitlam government's initiative of introducing no-fault divorce and payments for single parents. She said that she felt brave enough to leave home. She walked into the equivalent of Centrelink—in those days it was called something else—to ask for the sole-parent pension and of course all the people serving in this country Centrelink office were the friends of her husband and his family, so she had to start disclosing all sorts of things. This adds to what is already a traumatic situation.

The paper goes on to refer to gun ownership and isolation. As I say, the paper that was written by the Rural, Regional, Remote Women's Network, Hon Jackie Jarvis and Kendall Galbraith goes into all these things, including isolation.

I want to share one story because I think it is very important, and other speakers have touched on it. I found this in the paper. I hope Hon Jackie Jarvis does not mind me doing this. I found this very powerful and very challenging. I will share the paragraph in the report headed "A story on being silent". It states —

One woman recalled a moment that she has never forgotten. She said that farming families in her community would go to a popular holiday spot and camp. One night, when everyone was in their tents, she and her husband heard fighting and screaming, and they knew who it was and what was happening and that it was

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loud enough for everyone else at the campsite to also hear it. She turned to her husband and asked if he would do anything and he responded with ‘not getting involved in that’. The next morning, she remembers standing there with all the other farming families and watching this family pack up their belongings and leave. She felt of herself and everyone else at the campsite, that they were complicit to an act of domestic violence. She finished her story by saying ‘if a stranger had come into the campsite that night and started attacking a woman, I’m sure all the men would have got up and defended her’.

The writers go on to say —

We heard other stories citing cultural silence or concerns of damaging social status and how to tackle this ingrained culture remained problematic.

I do not necessarily want to finish my contribution on a negative note, but in my regional and remote communities in the south west, members of the Country Women’s Association—we have talked about those stereotypes—were the first people to speak about suicide prevention. A story about the establishment of men’s sheds around the state was much told during the rollout of a mental health program in around 2014, which is when the Western Australian government started focusing on suicide prevention. These groups of mental health professionals were travelling around the state and every time they came to a small town, a social function would be put on—a dinner, a sundowner or something like that. The women would bring the men and then the men would stay afterwards to get involved. It was an absolute eye-opener to the mental health professionals, who thought that they would never get regional and remote men to engage in talking about something like a men’s shed. I always think of that marvellous scene in *Mad Bastards*, which is set in the country of Hon Rosie Sahanna. When a men’s group starts, he says, “What will we need?” and they say, “Sausages and ketchup.” Once you have men, sausages and tomato sauce, you can start a conversation! The CWA has been right out there, leading the conversation on suicide prevention and leading the story on child sexual abuse in rural and regional communities.

It has been a real honour today to contribute to this debate and to be in such august company as those in the gallery. I regard you as rural and regional royalty. Maybe that is what RRR stands for! Thank you again to Hon Jackie Jarvis for giving us the opportunity to air these most important issues.

HON STEPHEN DAWSON (Mining and Pastoral — Deputy Leader of the House) [2.39 pm]: It is my pleasure to rise today to make a short contribution on this motion. I was not going to speak, but while sitting here listening to the previous speakers, I thought about the many amazing women doing extraordinary things in my electorate. This motion gives me an opportunity to acknowledge the great work that they do. I am very pleased and proud to be a member of the Labor Party in this Parliament and the Legislative Council in particular because we have a membership of six regional women and four regional blokes. Those six regional women, like the rest of the women in this place, are extraordinary and bring so much vitality and experience to this place. I acknowledge at the outset Hon Jackie Jarvis, whom I have had the pleasure of knowing for a number of years now. She is a great contributor in this place and I thank her for the motion before us today. There is also Hon Dr Sally Talbot; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Rosie Sahanna from my own electorate of Mining and Pastoral Region; Hon Sandra Carr, who is away today; and Hon Shelley Payne. They are from diverse parts of the state and have diverse backgrounds. We have people who have been flautists, businesspeople, chemical engineers and councillors, and people who have run not-for-profit organisations. It is an amazing group of people in this chamber who really add to the life of Parliament.

I will acknowledge the rural women in the Labor Party in the other place as well. There is Jane Kelsbie in Warren–Blackwood; Robyn Clarke in Murray–Wellington; my friend Divina D’Anna in the Kimberley; Ali Kent in Kalgoorlie; Lara Dalton in Geraldton; Lisa Munday in Dawesville; Rebecca Stephens in Albany; and Jodie Hanns in Collie–Preston. They are women from electorates in far-flung parts of the state, representing our community and regional communities in Parliament.

To the Rural, Regional, Remote Women’s Network of Western Australia and the Country Women’s Association, thank you for being here this afternoon. I know of the RRR Network mainly through Jackie, when over the years she was involved with the organisation. I thank you for your continuing advocacy for rural and regional women in society. To the CWA, I know you are so much more than cookbooks! I acknowledge Hon Dr Sally Talbot’s contribution about mental health. Having been Minister for Mental Health, I know how hard it is to get blokes to come to events and to talk about their mental health needs. If it were not for those women from the CWA getting the blokes in the room in the first place, we would be in a lot worse situation than we are now. In saying that, I do have the cookbook and I love your scones, so thank you for that too! As Minister for Emergency Services, I want to acknowledge the work that the women of the CWA do in regional communities, particularly when we have fires. Thank you on multiple levels, not only for your cooking, but also what you do making our community a much better place.

I note that the motion before us talks about a range of industries, like mining, agricultural production, fishing, food security and natural resource management, but there are so many we could add. There are so many women leading in so many diverse industries or sectors who are making Western Australia and our regional and rural communities

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better places. While I was sitting listening to the earlier contributions, I was writing down the names of women I am proud to know and I want to mention this afternoon.

I will start with the Port Hedland Chamber of Commerce and Industry. This group really does drive industry and industry participation. It is the voice of industry in the Port Hedland region and has helped build the economic strength of the region. The Port Hedland Chamber of Commerce and Industry is an all-female team led by the CEO, Claire Boyce. She is an amazing compatriot of mine from Ireland. Michelle Scott is the executive officer. Tessa Hughes is the economic development officer. Tina Scott is the web development officer and of course Therese Anderson is the president. It is a fantastic, dynamic bunch of women who really do help Western Australian's economy and, indeed, Australia's economy with what they do in Port Hedland.

We also have the Broome Chamber of Commerce. I know Sharni Foulkes from my days representing Kalgoorlie. She is the CEO of the Broome Chamber of Commerce and also leads an all-female team. Again, these sectors are often seen as blokey or have been led by blokes in the past, but now women are leading the way. I want to acknowledge Sharni and her team of Allison, Belinda, Chavon and Erin.

I want to talk about some of the women in Aboriginal organisations in Port Hedland, people like Trina Stoddart, who is the CEO of Julyardi Aboriginal Corporation, and Maureen Kelly, JP, who is a wonderfully strong, powerful woman in the Pilbara. They help us, and make the Pilbara a better place for Aboriginal people. In Aboriginal organisations and the disability sector there are women like Kathy Hough, who was previously in Albany and is now in Broome as the CEO of Far North Community Services, a disability organisation. She is out there making sure that people with disability in places like Halls Creek, Fitzroy and smaller communities have access to disability services and the National Disability Insurance Scheme. That is changing the lives of women, men, boys and girls. Stephanie Soter is the CEO of Empowering People in Communities, a similar organisation in Karratha that is also making sure that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal boys, girls, men and women with disability are getting access to services in the Pilbara. Kelly Howlett is the CEO of Bloodwood Tree Association based in Port Hedland. Until recently she was the chair of the Care for Hedland Environmental Association and has been a long time passionate advocate for people generally, but certainly people and the environment. I want to pay tribute to Kelly. She recently stood down as the chair of Care for Hedland and had done a tremendous job over the years and continues to do a tremendous job.

Sabina Shugg is the director of the Kalgoorlie campus of Curtin University in Kalgoorlie, which encompasses the WA School of Mines. Sabina is someone who has come up through the mining sector—again, a non-traditional area for women. She gives so much and makes the mining sector in Western Australia a better place and a more economic place. She is in a non-traditional area in regional WA kicking goals. Pia Andrews is a Broome-based innovator in the IT sector. She works for Amazon Web Services, and during COVID-19 when people were working from home, she decided that she wanted to work out of Broome. She should have been in Singapore, San Francisco or somewhere else, but she is in Broome and is now contributing to the local Broome and Kimberley community. Pam Gardner is a leading mental health advocate from Esperance whom I have had the pleasure of working with over the years. She is another woman in remote regional Western Australia who is leading the way and helping people with mental health issues, making sure they have access to services and support when they need them. Cara Peek has been mentioned a couple of times today. She is a Broome-based lawyer, an award winner, a social innovator, an amazing young woman and founder of Saltwater Country. Again, she is a passionate leader and a strong, amazing contributor to our society in Broome.

Jodie Bell is the CEO of Goolarri Media Enterprises and Kira Fong is its chief operations officer. Jodie has done so much for broadcasting and entertainment not only in the Kimberley but also across Western Australia. She runs a tight ship and is an amazing leader. Kira Fong, OAM, has been awarded an Order of Australia medal for her leadership. She helped introduce the Kimberley Girl, Pilbara Girl and Goldfields Girl competitions that have done so much to help foster young Aboriginal women and encourage them to get into new and diverse industries. Women like this, I am sure for those of us in regional Western Australia, exist in all our communities and I have missed many of them today. This was an opportunity to thank each and every one of them, and each and every woman who lives in my electorate and regional Western Australia. I wish them all the very best for the United Nations International Day of Rural Women on 15 October. Thank you for what you have done to make Western Australia, and indeed the world, a better place. Thank you for what you continue to do. Have a great day on the fifteenth and I look forward to having more women in here in the future.

HON DARREN WEST (Agricultural — Parliamentary Secretary) [2.48 pm]: Like my colleagues and opposite members I rise in furious support of this motion brought today by Hon Jackie Jarvis to the house celebrating the achievements of rural women and the United Nations International Day of Rural Women coming up this Saturday. It is not lost on me that it is in the same week as the tenth anniversary of Julia Gillard's misogyny speech made in federal Parliament. I will touch on that a little later.

It has been pointed out that Hon Jackie Jarvis was named as the WA rural woman of the year in 2014. I think the honourable member and I share something in common in that our journeys into this place were long, and there were

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times they looked like they may not eventuate. I am very pleased to say that Hon Jackie Jarvis is now an entrenched member of the Legislative Council and is making a wonderful contribution to Western Australia, and particularly to regional Western Australia. She continues to advocate for the men and women of the regions, and particularly for women's issues.

There is a view that matters of interest to women should probably be left to women. I do not agree with that view. I think that it is very important that men advocate for these things as well. It is often men who are the problem and it is often men who need to change. As has been pointed out earlier today, our parliamentary team is predominantly made up of women. That needed to be changed, and it was changed by some strong women's advocacy, but, in the end, the men who had control of the numbers, the parties and the positions at that time had to agree. When it happened and we finally had equal numbers of men and women in Parliament, we wondered why it did not happen years before, because it is so much better now.

I am really pleased that the representatives from the Rural, Regional, Remote Women's Network of Western Australia and the Country Women's Association are here today, because having them here has enriched the debate. We are obviously all saying nice things about them, but it is great to have them with us today. I acknowledge Kendall and her team. I had a very young initiation to the CWA. My grandmother was a long-term and powerhouse member of the Caversham branch, and many times I helped to make cups of tea and jam and cream scones to help Nanna out at the events that it held around the Swan Valley. It has been a great organisation for many years and has advocated for us and particularly for women in the regions.

I acknowledge the contribution made today by Hon Rosie Sahanna. It got me thinking that we have perhaps focused our attention today on the present and more recent history, but we live on the land of many First Nations groups—the longest continuous civilisation in the world. The women were vital to the continuing survival and flourishing of those groups and organisations. In my role as an MP, I regularly deal with Yamatji and Noongar women. When there is a problem, that is who you go to get it sorted out, that is where you go to get the information, and that is where the most common sense seems to lie when there is a conflict. I am sure that has been the case right throughout history, because there have been times when conflicts and disputes needed resolutions. My experience in working with all the wonderful Noongar and Yamatji women across the Agricultural Region has led me to that view, and I am sure that was the case. We are going back 50 000 years in this debate, members.

In more recent times, as Hon Steve Martin mentioned, last weekend we went out to Hyden. It was a wonderful celebration of a very resilient community to celebrate 100 years since the first white settlers came to clear land and grow crops in Hyden. In that time, they have increased the production of grain by a thousandfold, so the remarkable achievements in that community have been shared among the whole community. As Hon Steve Martin said, this event had a male chair, but we all know who organised and ran that event and we all know who organises and runs that community. There is a notion that women taking roles in agriculture is something new. I have to tell members that I think our women have been running agriculture for many, many years. We all know who is in charge on our family farms. When we have to make those big decisions, it is never done without the consultation of the women involved in the partnership and the business. I think there is a well-worn path of women taking positions of leadership and getting things going in our rural communities. That has been very important over the last hundred or so years of settlement in not only Hyden but also all our communities.

In our rural communities, most of the people who help out in hospitals, at our volunteer ambulance bases, in care facilities and generally in the community are our women. They have played an important role for a long time. When we look back to the time of the suffragettes and the suffrage movement, that happened in the regions as well; there were those who fought for greater rights. We look back to not only Edith Cowan but also May Holman, a regional woman who was elected to the Legislative Assembly way back and was one of the first women to represent a regional electorate. They made advances and inspired the younger women coming through, which still holds true today. A group of people are doing that right now today. There has been progress for women ranging from supportive roles to leadership roles. We have seen a lot of that, but we cannot just rest on that. There is a lot more to be done. We still live in a time when women are over-represented in the statistics for family and domestic violence and sexual assault, and there is still a gender pay gap. Who knew? It is still not getting any better. We still have work to do. I distinctly remember a motion on the gender pay gap when I first came here in 2013 that was brought on by the now President, Hon Alannah Clohesy. Having come from running a farming business and not being involved in that sphere, that motion opened my eyes to the problem we have and to how we still have not been able to resolve it. It is still a thing in 2022.

There have been some great advances in early education. I acknowledge the work of Minister Simone McGurk in establishing the Regional Early Education and Development concept to make early education and child care more readily available in our regional communities. This opens up a great range of opportunities for women whose role has traditionally been to look after the children. It opens great opportunities for them. We still have sexism and misogyny in our community. I acknowledge Julia Gillard who called it out very publicly in the Parliament of

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Australia. “That man” went on to become one of our worst Prime Ministers. I am pleased that she called that out because every time that happens, it helps the next group of people coming through. Her time as our first-ever female Prime Minister was marred by sexism and misogyny from not only across the other side of the Parliament, but also the disgraceful stories in the media. As she said, every time another woman is elected Prime Minister, it will be easier for the next one. The same goes for our first Premiers, Joan Kirner in Victoria and our own Carmen Lawrence from the Agricultural Region here in Western Australia. Those women inspired others to step forward and take that path. Recently in this house we have had the first and second female Presidents, Hon Kate Doust and Hon Alanna Clohesy. We now also have the first female Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Michelle Roberts. Those ultra-traditionally male roles are now being filled by women, and we should all be very, very proud of that.

Hon Stephen Dawson: Darren, you forgot to mention Sue Ellery!

Hon DARREN WEST: The first Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council is Sue Ellery. Thank you for pointing out that glaring omission on my part, member. I am sure I will hear more about that!

We still have problems and issues in the workplace that women are subjected to. It is men who need to change a lot of their behaviour in the workplace regarding those things I have just talked about. Our caucus comprises 50 per cent women. There are 34 regional members of Parliament in both houses, 21 of whom are WA Labor members. We are very proud of what we have achieved in the regions. Of those 21 regional members, 14 are women and seven are men. We not only have the numbers in terms of party politics, but also half the regional members of Parliament are women, of which 14 are from Labor and three are from the other parties, including some in here.

We are making advances in the number of women on boards and in leadership roles in education, science, medicine, economics and business. More and more women are stepping into those roles and breaking the notion that they are men’s roles. That is great. We are getting more flexible working arrangements for mums with young children so that they can better participate in the workforce. I touched on child care, flexible working hours and working from home earlier.

Deputy President, can I just check that I need to leave five minutes available today?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I will let you know when there is five minutes left.

Hon DARREN WEST: Thank you, Deputy President, because I want to finish on a few more things.

I certainly do not want to sound like our former Prime Minister, but I have a daughter and a son, and the issues that we have talked about today are very important to me because of my daughter and son. I believe very strongly in fairness, equality and social justice. I believe in those things equally for both my children, and they are great children. They are making their own way in the world, but I would like to see, before I leave here, and it probably will not be until after I leave, true equal opportunity for both my children. That is why I stand and support what I support. That is why I stand and delve into places that people say that I should not. I have had very mixed experiences of standing and defending women in what is sometimes seen as a role that women should be doing, because I think it is men who need to swing these changes, work with women and encourage and inspire women like Hon Jackie Jarvis, who brought this motion to the house.

Earlier I mentioned that we both had quite a long apprenticeship to get into Parliament. I can remember times when Hon Jackie Jarvis almost gave it away and we had talks about that. But Hon Jackie Jarvis stuck at it and made it here. She is a great member of Parliament. We are very proud to have her with us and she is an inspiration for young regional women coming through to never give it up, never give it away. They can do anything the blokes can and they can do it just as well as they can. Hon Dr Sally Talbot stole my line about Ginger Rogers; I love that little story. I think it is very apt, and it certainly is the case in all the areas that I work in.

Members, it is great to talk about this. It is great that the motion has the support of everyone across the house. Of course we promote, value, respect and admire the role of women in our communities, especially our regional communities because that is where we see that effort at its best. This Saturday, 15 October, is the United Nations International Day of Rural Women. I hope that all our rural women celebrate and enjoy the day and we can help enjoy and celebrate it with them.

HON JACKIE JARVIS (South West) [3.01 pm] — in reply: I would like to thank all my colleagues on both sides of the chamber who contributed to this motion. Thank you all for your positive feedback and your positive input.

I start by mentioning Minister MacTiernan. Minister MacTiernan talked about the role of bringing women to the decision-making table, and I have seen firsthand that not many people have done as much as she has in the six years that she has been minister in making sure that women are at those agricultural decision-making tables. What she has done, in a very practical way, is ensure that the skills and experiences of regional women translate to being at those decision-making tables.

Extract from Hansard

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I thank Hon Colin de Grussa for his input. He reminded me of course of Marg Agnew, and Hon Shelley Payne mentioned Marg as well. Marg was indeed the founder of the RRR Network, having returned from a trip to Victoria and seen how the regional women there were organised. She harassed a lot of ministers of the day to get that off the ground, and she has been recognised by the RRR Network as our founding foremother—is that a word? She was indeed!

Hon Colin de Grussa mentioned that we need more women in leadership positions. I am a little disappointed that the gentlemen on that side of the house did not take the opportunity to mention the female leaders in their parties, and I assume that was in the spirit of bipartisanship, but I will mention the member for Central Wheatbelt, Hon Mia Davies, Leader of the Opposition; and, of course, the member for Vasse, Libby Mettam, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, as regional women who also make a significant contribution to politics in Western Australia.

I also thank the honourable member for pointing out the Grattan Institute figures on the significant growth in GDP that can be achieved if we mobilise our workforce's full potential.

Hon Sophia Moermond, like many of us, is an advocate of the Country Women's Association cookbook. It has been the CWA's bible and the bible of many students in Western Australia, so thank you for reminding us of that and for speaking of the geographic isolation that many women suffer.

Hon Steve Martin quite rightly acknowledged the importance of family partnerships. I was also interested when he talked about his grandmother who was a schoolteacher. I suspect that if we did not have that long history of sending female schoolteachers to regional Western Australia, there would be a lot more bachelors in regional Western Australia. I understand that the start of school year was always of interest to the young men of certain towns! I also thank Hon Steve Martin for mentioning the Livestock Collective. I have followed its work with interest and, again, there is that idea that we communicate what we do in the agricultural space to the broader community. In many ways, the Livestock Collective follows on from the great work done by my friend Catherine Marriott, who won the 2012 Rural Women's Award. She had a similar project teaching northern cattle stations how to effectively communicate what they do and the great animal welfare work that they do.

I thank my colleague Hon Shelley Payne. She reminded me about agricultural colleges. I do not know the data, but I suspect that not too many decades ago agricultural colleges were filled mainly with young men and that young women were not allowed to attend, perhaps because of the boarding nature of those colleges. She highlighted the important role that our agricultural colleges play in educating young men and women equally. Hon Shelley Payne also highlighted the number of programs that the McGowan government has initiated to support regional women, and I hope the report that Hon Dr Sally Talbot mentioned, the *Women's voices regional report*, played some small role in acknowledging what needs to happen in regional WA.

I thank Hon Rosie Sahanna for her contribution. She always brings a cultural lens and experience to this place. She mentioned all the amazing Aboriginal women she knows. She obviously did not mention herself, but we are incredibly honoured to have her as a respected female elder here in this place to pass her life experience on to us. I like the way she highlighted the issue of stolen wages. Indeed, when we talk about unpaid domestic work, we are talking from a very European perspective, but she reminded us all about stolen wages. I love that she said it highlighted the resilience of women who still managed to feed their families and keep their communities together whilst working, unpaid, for other people's benefit.

Hon Dr Sally Talbot has just been named the president of the Jackie Jarvis fan club! I thank her for that. The 2019 *Women's voices regional report* was prepared by the RRR Network, and as Hon Dr Sally Talbot reminded me, we interviewed more than 150 women in regional WA. I might add that we did it on a shoestring budget, because if you want a job done efficiently and cheaply, just get a rural woman to do it; we know how to do things on a budget. It was a great experience. Thank you to everyone else who contributed.

Question put and passed.