



Welcome



The first weeks of the 2019 parliamentary year have been jam packed with legislation, protests, speeches, committee work and parliamentary questions. On the first day back I joined protestors on the steps of parliament to let the Government know that we are STILL opposed to fracking.

The passage of the Gender Reassignment Amendment Bill was a great way to begin the year and represents another important step towards true equality for the WA LGBTIQ community - and not before time. We must continue to work towards dismantling ALL legal barriers that have prevented the LGBTIQ community from having the same rights as other Western Australians.

Locally, the incredibly disappointing saga of the Shenton Park Rehabilitation Hospital site provided yet another recent example of how flawed the planning process is. The Greens have been calling for third-party right of review for planning decisions for many years. Despite the

community's committed campaign to save the ecological linkage between Underwood Avenue and Shenton Park Bush Forever sites, in this instance greed has won and the environment has lost.

I've included in this newsletter a guide to the use of petitions in the Legislative Council. Petitions can be a useful strategy to draw parliament's attention to issues. If you intend to circulate a petition for presentation to parliament, please let my office know – my staff can help make sure it is correctly written and formatted and hence able to be tabled.

In news from the office, we have farewelled, for now, my wonderful media and communications coordinator, Arran, who is now on maternity leave. We are looking forward to meeting sweet baby Morton in the next month or so.



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Women unlikely to reach CEO parity until 2100

I attended the launch of 'Gender Equity Insights 2019—Breaking through the glass ceiling' published by the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre. This important report provides the latest pay equity data and modelling for Australian workplaces.

While the report demonstrates that there have been some welcome improvements - women are now progressing into management at a faster rate than men - it is very disheartening to learn that some sectors (Rental Hiring and Real Estate) still have gender pay gaps of over 35%. Distressingly, the report predicts that it will be another 80 years until we see an equal number of women in CEO positions.

The report showcases the vital role that flexible workplace policies, on-site childcare and paid parental leave play in improving gender equality in workplaces. It is crucial that governments take heed of this data and invest in strategies to decrease our gender pay gap so that our children and grandchildren don't have to wait until next century to achieve gender equality in the workplace.

With Libby Lyons, Director of the Workplace Gender Equality Agency at the launch of Gender Equity Insights 2019.



Tragic findings of Aboriginal suicide inquest

Earlier this month the Coroner released a report into the deaths of 13 children and young persons in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. It was truly heartbreaking to read of the circumstances leading up to each of these deaths.

The rates of suicide for Aboriginal people is an indictment on successive governments and we should all be outraged and demanding greater action. It is all the more terrible because we know what the issues are – in the last 18 years there have been 40 reports into Aboriginal suicide, with 700 recommendations being made.

Despite this the Coroner's report provides harrowing evidence of what the day to day reality remains like for young people on the ground. Almost all the children and young people grew up in homes with high levels of alcohol use, many witnessed chronic and severe domestic violence, many had preventable health conditions and these young people were often moved from home to home.

It is unacceptable that children in our state are living in circumstances where they are at significant risk of harm. Government must provide long term funding for WA suicide prevention services and ensure access to culturally appropriate mental

health services, while also addressing the findings from the Coroner relating to physical health, and to the underlying social determinants of ill-health.

These children were clearly loved and their deaths, which were preventable, have had a profound impact on their families and communities.

There are no simple answers but I am committed to doing my part to ensure that the Government takes heed of the recommendations and have already done a number of speeches in Parliament on the report.

Remembering Aia Maasarwe

On 22 January I spoke at the rally remembering Aia Maasarwe, the young Palestinian woman murdered and raped in Melbourne.

One woman is violently murdered approximately every 4.7 days in Australia. According to the Counting Dead Women Australia project, by 19 February 2019 eight women had already lost their lives this year due to violence. The seriousness of this issue cannot be overstated. It is a national crisis that urgently needs to be addressed.

I will continue to call on the state government to do more to ensure this work, including the prevention of family and domestic violence, and the provision of safe refuges for victims, is a priority.

Photo credit: Marziya Mohammedali



Call to ban gay conversion therapy

I was heartened to see the Premier of Victoria's recent announcement that gay conversion therapy will be banned in Victoria. I have used the opportunity to renew my calls for the draconian practice to be banned here. Gay conversion therapy is an appalling practice that attempts to change the fundamental truth of a person's identity by methods which are questionable at best and outright abusive at worst and there is no place for conversion therapy in modern day mental health standards.

The fact that this practice even exists highlights the need for all counsellors and psychotherapists to be registered with a body such as the Australian Health Practitioner Regulatory Agency. No reputable practitioner would undertake this so-called therapy.



We know that the Australian community want less discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people, not more, and banning gay conversion immediately sends a clear message that the WA Government is prepared to defend the human rights of some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

It always feels like the official start of the year when it's time for the WACOSS New Year Sector Breakfast. I enjoyed a fantastic morning catching up with friends and former colleagues from within the community sector including Deb Zanella from Ruah, and Ian Carter from Anglicare WA (picture above) and Debbie Childs from Helping Minds (below).

Focus on FASD needed

In her recent report on the deaths of 13 children and young people in the Kimberley, the WA Coroner noted that the devastating effect that FASD has on an individual, the community and future generations could not be underestimated.

Although none of the children who so tragically lost their lives had been formally diagnosed with FASD, the Coroner found that there was sufficient information to consider it likely that at least some of them had FASD, and seven of her 42 recommendations related directly to FASD.

The federal government has stepped up efforts to tackle FASD with the release of a new national action plan late last year. Disappointingly, WA has yet to develop a comprehensive plan that addresses prevention, awareness raising, early diagnosis and intervention, as well as support strategies and services.

As I noted recently in parliament, we desperately need leadership, focus and a level of urgency injected into the state approach to FASD.



NORTH METRO URBAN INFILL

One of the issues my office has been working on is how we should deal with the seemingly endless expansion of urbanisation along the northern coastline. Perth continues to see new developments created by simply clearing large areas of bushland, dividing it up into small blocks and then building a single house on each block. This leads to seas of roofs, a loss of local biodiversity and all the challenges with heat, soil quality and amenity that losing tree canopy brings.

Currently Perth's footprint is the 63rd largest in the world, but we are only the 277th biggest city by population – we take up only slightly less space than London and slightly more space than Ho Chi Minh City. Taipei, with nearly 9 million people is approximately half the size of Perth. European cities with a similar urban population to Perth (around the 2 million mark) such as Hamburg and Brussels occupy less than a third of the physical space of Perth. Frankfurt, with a nearly identical population to Perth takes up just a quarter of the physical space.

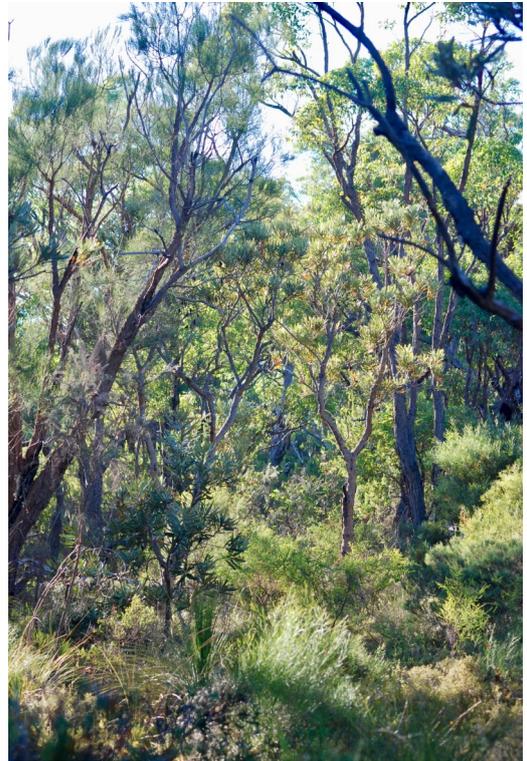
We know that the South West of WA, including the Swan Coastal Plain was one of the original 25 international biodiversity hot-spots, with less than 30% of the extremely localised and unique ecological communities remaining, with ongoing development pressures putting those unique ecological communities at further risk.

Continuing to expand the city at the edges creates housing, some of which may be affordable, but creates issues in terms of the time and cost of transport and makes providing essential health and safety services much more difficult for municipal bodies.

Our strategic planning documents identify a minimum of 47% of new housing in Perth be constructed as infill developments, within the city's existing urban footprint. However, even meeting this target in a sustainable way that allows us to maintain our tree canopy cover is extremely difficult.

The Government has finally gazetted the first part of Design WA, which establishes a set of design principles for the built environment (State Planning Policy 7.0) and the new policy for new apartment buildings which will replace Part 6 of the R codes. In September last year the Government advised that the draft policies for precinct design and medium density should be available for public consultation early in the New Year. We have yet to see those documents.

Local Councils across Perth have committed substantial time and energy to ensuring that they are enhancing their urban forests and increasing their canopy coverage in the land over which they have control. Late last year the Western Australian Local Government Association



released the Better Urban Forest Planning Guide. One of the key issues identified over and over by Local Government is the loss of canopy on private land, as people extend their houses, split their blocks and undertake small-scale infill projects.

Design WA makes an attempt to ensure that new apartment buildings will be required to provide trees and space for large mature trees as part of the landscaping and liveability requirements. Which helps, but by no means addresses all the sources of canopy loss as a result of infill.

I have presented a number of petitions on behalf of community groups affected by infill proposals and local planning scheme changes that fail to properly address community concerns about amenity, bushland and canopy retention. I have no doubt that this will continue to be an issue for communities facing infill pressures with insufficient safeguards for treasured aspects of neighbourhood and lifestyle, including our precious urban forest and urban bushlands.

The Greens will continue to press the Government for better a better planning system that considers protection of trees and enhancement of the urban forest as a design constraint, rather than an easily brushed aside consideration.



Petitions

One of the most direct ways members of the community can put their concerns before Parliament is through the petitions process.

In the lower house, the petition will be tabled and the MP and the Minister both may choose to speak on it – and then the process is complete. In the Legislative Council, all petitions are considered by the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs.

The Committee will ask for submissions from the principal petitioner, the tabling member, the relevant Minister and anyone else they deem to hold relevant and useful information. They will then consider this information.

It is very important to work with a sympathetic MP who understands the complexities of your issue and who will follow through with a submission to the Committee, otherwise the Committee is highly unlikely to consider your issue.

If you are thinking about putting together a Parliamentary petition, please make sure to speak with my office first to assist with wording and format to ensure that your hard work collecting signatures is not wasted.

Pictures on this page and next courtesy of Friends of Underwood Avenue Bushland



Auditor General calls for more support for vulnerable tenants

The WA Auditor General's report 'Managing Disruptive Behaviour in Public Housing,' released in late December, identified serious failings in the Department of Communities' response to vulnerable tenants.

Poor mental health; family violence; drug and alcohol abuse and inter-generational dysfunction have been shown to contribute to disruptive tenant behaviours.

The Auditor General correctly identified that these issues should be addressed through appropriate referrals and support, not via a punitive approach that results in vulnerable individuals and families being made homeless.

It is clear that the Department of Communities has a responsibility to support tenants to maintain stable housing – not to contribute to appalling rates of homelessness

We all want to live in safe and peaceful neighbourhoods. I have called on the Government to ensure they provide a holistic response that addresses the underlying causes of disruptive behaviour.

Updated modelling released for the 10 year Mental Health, AOD Plan

The Mental Health Commission recently released a draft update on the state's 10 year Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug plan and have invited public comment up until early April 2019.

While I am pleased to see the updated modelling finally released, the draft Plan Update 2018 confirms what I have been saying for a long time – we are falling way short of the targets needed to turn our failing system around.

The original plan took much work and was developed after the most rigorous of processes, and received bi-partisan

support. However, successive governments are failing to adhere to the directions set out and we as a community are paying the price for it.

Unless there is a significantly greater investment in prevention and community support, the acute end of the care spectrum, such as our struggling Emergency Departments will continue to be under enormous strain.

We simply cannot afford to continue on as we have been doing. If current service levels are maintained by 2025 we will only have 19% of the community support

services needed – falling way behind demand. The lack of substantial investment into community support and prevention services in the McGowan Government's last budget failed to provide any indication that the Government is committed to tackling this issue.

I will continue to advocate strongly in Parliament and in the community for the government to take heed of their own plan. There are already too many families struggling to get the support they need, unless we act now an already desperate state of affairs is set to get worse.

Ocean Reef Marina update

In mid-February, the Environmental Protection Agency approved the marine elements of the Ocean Reef Marina project.

This project will see the complete destruction of approximately 30% of the existing Burns Beach reef, including nearly 10% of the abalone habitat in the Marmion Marine Park.

The Abalone Divers Association continues to be concerned about the potential for additional impacts to the north of the marina. They believe that previous builds have substantially under-estimated the impact on Roe Abalone and that this proposal similarly fails to predict the impact.

The process of rezoning the land elements of the marina development is being considered entirely separately to the

impact on the marine environment, which is a major concern. The full environmental impact of the marina is not being assessed at the same time and this is a deeply concerning flaw in the planning and approvals process.

The EPA has not provided comment about the proponent's assessment of the risks of storm erosion and sea level rise over the 50-100 year timeframes, but has only noted that this assessment has been done.

I am continuing to follow-up on concerns about the original decisions to site this marina in an area designated for protection.

I will also follow up concerns that advice regarding the design of the marina that would minimise the impact on the Burns Beach reef has not been properly considered.

Joshua Warneke

I recently spoke in parliament about the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission's report – "The More Things Change...: Matters arising from the Corruption and Crime Commission's Report on Operation Aviemore: Major Crime Squad Investigation into the Unlawful Killing of Mr Joshua Warneke".

The Joshua Warneke matter is a heartbreaking blight on the law and order history of this state. A young man was murdered in Broome and his killer has still to be found. Mr Gene Gibson, an Aboriginal man who has cognitive impairment, speaks very

little English, and has serious and genuine cultural issues with his interaction with the police, was wrongfully charged and found guilty, and has been subsequently exonerated.

This is a tragedy on two fronts. Firstly, it is a tragedy for Mr Gene Gibson himself, who endured years of prison, and, secondly, it is a genuine tragedy for the family of Joshua Warneke, especially his mother, who has never stopped trying to find the person responsible for the murder of her precious son. It is crucial that the findings from this report lead to reform's in the way police operate, particularly in remote areas and with remote Aboriginal communities. The report contains many recommendations for reform.



Make Redress right

I continue to support the Make Redress Right campaign and to advocate for justice for the survivors of institutional child abuse who do not qualify for compensation under the National Redress Scheme because they did not suffer sexual abuse.

The campaign, initiated by Tuart Place, highlights the ongoing failure of the state government to right the wrongs done by the Redress WA scheme. These survivors experienced horrific abuse and neglect while in out of home care. With many survivors now aged in their 70s and 80s, I will continue to urge the Government to support the Make Redress Right campaign and right the wrongs of the past before it is too late.

More photos from the WACOSS New Year Sector Breakfast. This time with Justine Colyer from the Rise Network, Penny Webb from South Coastal Health and Community Services, and Ross Wortham from the Youth Affairs Council of WA

Surrogacy Bill

At the time of writing, the Council is debating the Human Reproductive Technology and Surrogacy Bill 2019. As lead speaker for the Greens, I am pleased to speak on this Bill that will further remove discrimination from Western Australian laws.

The exemption to the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act that allowed Western Australia to deny single men and gay couples access to altruistic surrogacy has expired.

I have heard many stories of men in this situation longing for the opportunity to start their own families and I am hopeful that this Bill will pass and allow them to do so without the expense, uncertainty and potential for exploitation of international commercial surrogacy.

I was really pleased earlier this month to meet with the Valuing Children's Initiative in my role as Co-Chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Children along with my fellow Co-Chairs Hon Donna Faragher and Lisa Baker MLA.

There is lots of important work to do in WA to ensure our children and young people get the best possible start in life.



Gender reassignment bill

The first sitting of Parliament saw the passing of legislation which will mean Western Australians changing gender will no longer be forced to divorce.

Before federal marriage equality laws were achieved in December 2017, a married person who chose to change gender, effectively making their marriage a same-sex marriage, was forced to choose between that marriage and an updated birth certificate which showed

their reassigned gender.

Since the federal marriage act was amended in December 2017 WA law has been at odds with Commonwealth law. Disappointingly, and despite my calls for action, the Government missed the cut-off date set in Federal law and were the last State to pass the necessary amendments.

During my contribution to the debate on this bill I used the opportunity to pay tribute to Greens Senator Janet Rice and

her wife Penny. Penny transitioned from male to female after her marriage to Janet. She was then left in the invidious position of having to choose between officially changing her gender on her birth certificate and remaining married to Janet. She chose the latter.

Over many years Janet and Penny have been generous in sharing their personal experience to help ease the journey for others in the same situation and I am very appreciative of their courage and resolve.

Trans homelessness

There have been many studies documenting the particular challenges and poorer outcomes for Trans and Gender Diverse (TGD) young people, but of particular note is recent research published by the Telethon Kids Institute and the Western Australian Commissioner for Children and Young People which clearly demonstrates how difficult life can be for TGD young people in our state.

One of the findings of this research is that TGD young people experience homelessness at a far greater rate than the rest of the population, and there is simply not enough support for

them. Knowing this I was very pleased to meet with Perth Inner City Youth Service and hear about their efforts to expand the services they offer in order to support greater numbers of TGD young people experiencing homelessness. PICYS is widely known to be a fantastic organisation that has an excellent track record of supporting TGD young people.

I am supporting the campaign to direct more funding to PICYS to allow them to extend the reach of their homelessness service in the upcoming budget.

Lemnos St Bushland

As foreshadowed at the end of last year, the full board of the Western Australian Planning Committee over-rode the initial decision to completely save the bushland, and has instead approved LandCorp's revised development plan.

This plan includes building envelopes inside the bushland and a fire management plan that further reduces this essential ecological linkage.

Once the developer is satisfied, our planning system does not allow any further appeal or input from the community. Western Australian planning law needs simplification and proper community engagement and consultation.

Alison's committees

Joint Standing Committee overseeing the Corruption and Crime Commission: The Committee, currently undertaking an important inquiry into public sector procurement of goods and services and its vulnerability to corrupt practice, has recently held public hearings with the Corruption and Crime Commissioner and the Parliamentary Inspector of the Corruption and Crime Commission.

Parliamentary Inquiry into Alternate Approaches to addressing illicit drug use (Chair): The Committee has received a wide range of public submissions and has now commenced its deliberations. The submissions are publicly available on the Committee's webpage.

Alfred Cove Wave Park

On behalf of the Swan Estuary Reserves Action Group, I tabled a petition and then made a submission regarding a piece of Crown Land, the sale of which would be required for the Wave Park development

Lot 9789 forms lies alongside the river from the riverbank to roughly 50m inland and extends to the East beyond the development site.

It is part of the Parks and Recreation Reserve 35486 and also part of Bush Forever site 331.

The development envelope for the Wave Park requires that this piece of land be sold by the State Government to the Melville Council so that they are able to rent it out to the Wave Park operators.

The Government has committed to not countenance the sale of Lot 9789 until and unless the project receives development approval from the relevant Joint Development Assessment Panel.



Get in touch.

HON. ALISON XAMON MLC

3 OXFORD CLOSE

WEST LEEDERVILLE 6007

P. (08) 9388 9355

E. xamonoffice@mp.wa.gov.au



Alison Xamon, Greens MLC



@alisonxamon



@alisonxamon

PORTFOLIOS

Alcohol and Other Drugs
Animal Welfare
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Family and Domestic Violence
Gambling
Health
Industrial Relations
Integrity of Government
Law and Order
Mental Health
Multicultural Affairs
Pay Equity
Public Sector
Seniors and Aging
Sexuality and Gender Diversity
Suicide Prevention
Training
Volunteering
Women
Worker Safety
Youth

Bills debated by Alison

Corruption, Crime and Misconduct
Amendment Bill 2017

Gender Reassignment Amendment Bill
2018

Criminal Law Amendment (Intimate
Images) Bill 2018

Other Parliamentary speeches

Animal Activism

Self defence

Mental Health Co-response teams

Aboriginal Youth Suicide

Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Lemnos Street Bushland

Joshua Warneke