

JOBS AND SKILLS CENTRES

470. Mr D.T. PUNCH to the Premier:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to ensuring that Western Australians, particularly those in regional Western Australia, have access to the training and skills they need to enter the workforce.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse, you have a death wish today.

Mr D.T. PUNCH: Can the Premier update the house on how this government's 13 jobs and skills centres are not only creating more job opportunities for Western Australians, but also supporting businesses in growing their workforce?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for Bunbury. I am very pleased to report that the member was at the opening of the Bunbury Jobs and Skills Centre a few weeks ago with the Minister for Education and Training, which was a half a million-dollar investment in that facility for the people of the south west and, indeed, for greater Bunbury. Training, of course, is one thing that we have focused on to a large extent since we have been in office. We know that a strong economy needs strong locally trained workers from Western Australia. That is why we took to the election our plan for jobs and skills centres, and we are delivering them across Western Australia.

Young people and people needing retraining are accessing these jobs and skills centres across the state. We have now delivered 13 jobs and skills centres across Western Australia. More than half of those are in regional Western Australia. Three weeks ago, the minister launched the Northam Jobs and Skills Centre, which will have outreach centres across the wheatbelt. A week ago, the Minister for Education and Training opened the Karratha Jobs and Skills Centre, which will provide outreach across the Pilbara. The Bunbury centre will deliver outreach services into Busselton, Collie, Margaret River and other communities. We are seeing strong results from our jobs and skills centres. The website, the services and direct services face to face have been accessed many thousands of times by people. If people go to one of the jobs and skills centres, they will be able to access expert advice, connecting them with employers or the courses they might need that suit their interests and background. We have seen 1 500 Aboriginal students and job seekers already benefit from these services.

As a parent, I know that it is very confusing these days. For parents with children in years 11 and 12 or who are leaving high school, this is a great service to Western Australians to access the labour market. Of course, this is contrary to what happened under the last government, when the TAFE sector was decimated when the now Leader of the Opposition put up fees on many courses by 500 per cent. For engineering, nursing and other important courses that people want to access for some of those great jobs out there in Western Australia, there was a 500 per cent increase in course fees by the now Leader of the Opposition and Liberal Party when they were in office. As a consequence, 10 000 fewer Western Australians enrolled in TAFE. When it comes to training, the Liberal Party made a mess of it. This government is creating the new services that Western Australian families and jobseekers need and want.