

CLEAN ENERGY NATIONAL CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

Statement by Minister for Training and Workforce Development

MS S.F. MCGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Training and Workforce Development) [12.07 pm]: I rise to inform the house that the WA government has lodged a proposal with the Albanese government to establish a clean energy national centre of excellence. In addition, we have applied to access part of the commonwealth government’s “turbocharge” funding announced last year to fast-track development of clean energy training and workforce initiatives. The clean energy investment pipeline in WA is in the vicinity of \$200 billion, and projections show that the clean energy sector is expected to generate around 350 000 jobs from 2025 to 2050. Increasing the number of apprentices, particularly in trades such as electricians, engineers, mechanics, plumbers, air conditioning and refrigeration mechanics, and metal fitters and machinists will be vital to ensure we have the skills needed to reach our target of net zero by 2050.

Due to the size, scale and diversity of projects being delivered right across the state in solar, wind, hydrogen and batteries, our proposed centre of excellence will consist of a network of WA TAFEs. This will ensure that we have the right skills in the right places at the right time to capitalise on the huge clean energy investment and export opportunities. It will be complemented by the significant investment this government has already made—just under \$270 million—to upgrade TAFE facilities and equipment to contemporary industry standards. It will leverage off existing state-of-the-art infrastructure such as the Australian Centre for Energy and Process Training at South Metropolitan TAFE’s Munster campus, the largest energy process simulation plant in the Southern Hemisphere.

More apprenticeships, new curriculum, industry partnerships, state-of-the-art simulation technologies and digital twinning are set to become a bigger part of the training and workforce development environment through the centre of excellence in collaboration with industry, unions, TAFE, universities and key training stakeholders. The centre will also support more Western Australians, including Aboriginal students and women, into clean energy jobs. Negotiations with the commonwealth are progressing, and I look forward to continuing to work with it on our proposal.