

STATE BUDGET 2014–15 — OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY FUNDING

343. MR N.W. MORTON to the Minister for Training and Workforce Development:

The oil and gas industry is an increasingly significant part of the Western Australian economy and provides thousands of jobs and millions of dollars in tax revenues to the state. Given that many of the people employed by this sector reside in my electorate, can the minister please inform the house of any funding in the 2014–15 budget to support the growth?

Dr K.D. HAMES replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

This is something that is in the budget, but I have not heard anyone talk about it yet, and I think it is really exciting. We know that the Australian Centre for Energy Process Training in Munster is a fantastic facility. It is internationally renowned for the quality of training it provides, particularly in the oil and gas sector. It is the only one in the southern hemisphere to have its own gas plant so that young students can be trained in how to manage it. In fact, contracts with major international companies send people from all over the world to attend that facility here in Western Australia. There is a huge demand for increased services, particularly from the member for Forrestfield's electorate, and there was a desperate need for expansion.

There has already been commitment from private enterprise to commit funds to an expansion if the state government will support it. There is \$15 million in the budget, which will allow the centre to double in size. Currently it has 900 students, with a combination of electrical engineering, civil engineering, technicians, draftspersons and particularly people in chemical and petroleum engineering and mining in the oil and gas sector. We will be able to double the number of students there from just 900 to 1 800 students, a massive step forward. When a number of large industry organisations saw it in the budget, they put out letters and press releases of congratulations to this government for supporting so well this sector of the industry.