

CORONAVIRUS — JOBS

694. Ms J.J. SHAW to the Premier:

I refer to the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the McGowan Labor government's decision to maintain the hard border. Can the Premier outline to the house what Western Australia's success in stopping community transmission of COVID-19 and maintaining the most open economy of any state in the country has meant for Western Australian jobs?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for Swan Hills for the question. As we have constantly said, the best economic response to COVID-19 is a strong and effective health response. Today's job figures clearly show that the health response that the government has put in place is paying dividends in creating jobs across Western Australia. We now have the most open economy within the nation and the fewest restrictions on gatherings and economic activity of any state in Australia.

Every employment indicator is heading in the right direction. In August, 32 200 jobs were created in Western Australia. The largest number of jobs created in any month in the history of Western Australia were created last month. That is a growth in jobs of 2.4 per cent, which is the strongest of any state in Australia. In August, about one-third of all the jobs created across Australia were created in Western Australia. With 11 per cent of the nation's population, we created one-third of the jobs! We have now recovered 71 per cent of the jobs lost at the start of the pandemic. There are now 47 000 more Western Australians in work than when this government came to office. On top of that, our participation rate has surged to 67.9 per cent, which is easily the highest in Australia. If our participation rate were the same as the national average or the average of one of the major states, our unemployment rate would, obviously, be significantly lower. Our unemployment rate is down. The number of people who are unemployed or underemployed is down. All that has happened because we put in place measures to protect Western Australians from COVID. Our hard border arrangement has worked.

Had we listened to those who wanted to bring down the hard border, such as Mr Clive Palmer and the Liberal Party, these results would not be there, especially if we had listened to the state Liberal Party.

Mr A. Krsticevic: Don't lie!

Withdrawal of Remark

The SPEAKER: Member for Carine, you will withdraw that. I just heard you say, "Don't lie."

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: I withdraw.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is true. Clive Palmer and the Liberal Party have tried to bring down our border. That is a statement of fact.

These figures are encouraging, but we are not out of the woods. We obviously need to be vigilant and very careful about the reintroduction of COVID to Western Australia. We also have to continue to implement our \$5.5 billion recovery plan that we worked through with industry, unions, not-for-profits and across government to ensure that we get activity back across the board in Western Australia in TAFE, manufacturing, education, and land sales and the like, and that we continue to get great results. I am very proud of Western Australians and what we have been able to do in this very difficult situation. Our state has done extraordinarily well. I would like to thank every Western Australian who has done the right thing in difficult circumstances. Today's job figures show that our plan to get people back to work and keep Western Australians safe is working.