

EMPLOYMENT, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

**1. Mrs PARKER to the Minister for Employment and Training:**

I understand that the September labour market figures were released today. Can the minister advise how the State is progressing in getting more Western Australians in work?

**Mr BOARD replied:**

I thank the member for Ballajura for the question. As I have said in the House on a number of occasions, the Government will never be complacent while anybody in this State is looking for work and is unable to find it. However, the September Australian Bureau of Statistics figures were released today and Western Australia's unemployment rate is 5.9 per cent - the lowest rate in Western Australia in a very long time. While again the Government can never be complacent, I say with some pride that the rate for youth unemployment in Western Australia - at 14.7 per cent - is 4 per cent lower than the national average. Young people in this State should celebrate the fact that they live in Western Australia.

Mr Kobelke: What about the loss of 10 000 full-time male jobs?

Mr BOARD: What was the unemployment rate in September 1992, when the Labor Party was in government? It was 11.3 per cent. Here is a good question. What was the youth unemployment rate in September 1992? It was 34.5 per cent. The Opposition should hang its head in shame. It should celebrate these figures with the rest of Western Australia.

The SPEAKER: Order! I formerly call the member for Willagee to order for the first time. I have reminded members that this is not an opportunity to sledge with comments, which have nothing to do with the question in hand, across the Parliament. I intend to take a fairly tough line on that.

Mr BOARD: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The Government is proud that 190 500 jobs have been created since 1993. A record number of people in this State - 930 800 - are in employment. The Minister for Women's Interests is also celebrating the fact that Western Australian women have the record low unemployment rate in this country - 4.7 per cent. Again, we cannot be complacent. However, a number of the programs that are operating in Western Australia are working well. Workplace reform has been highlighted today. Western Australia has gone from the worst performing State to the best performing State because of workplace reform. The Opposition should get behind, and stay behind, those reforms because they are doing the right thing in Western Australia.

The relationship between education, training and the workplace is showing great dividends. Some 150 000 people are involved in vocational education and training in Western Australia. That is one of the reasons that Western Australia has one of the lowest rates of youth unemployment in the country. This Government will continue that effort. Let us work together on it.