

EMPLOYMENT LEVELS

**57. Mr D.T. PUNCH to the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade:**

I refer to record unemployment that was a particular characteristic of the previous Liberal–National government. Will this government actually work with industry to create jobs; and, if so, how?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

First of all, in answering this question, I would like to acknowledge a group of town planning students from Curtin University's School of Built Environment who are in the Speaker's gallery today with their lecturer Mattie Turnbull.

I thank the member for Bunbury for the question. When this government arrived in office, the state's unemployment situation was that 93 600 Western Australians were out of work; in addition, about 150 000 Western Australians are unemployed. We have inherited a situation in which the state's domestic economy has been in recession for some years now. We went to the election with a plan to diversify and broaden the state's economy. We have already seen some action as a consequence of this government being elected. For instance, we have seen confidence return to the mining industry of Western Australia. I have received calls from senior leaders in the mining industry acknowledging that a new —

**Dr M.D. Nahan** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition, a question has been asked. We want to hear it. You might think you are funny, laughing and looking around to see if anyone is listening—they are not.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I have received calls from senior people in the mining industry, acknowledging that they have a government that is supporting the mining industry, and they are taking steps to ensure more local content as a consequence of this government's election. Members will have seen recent announcements by Rio Tinto in that regard. In addition, we have a plan to broaden and diversify the Western Australian economy. We have organised a range of industry engagement consortia, which basically is pulling industry together —

Several members interjected.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Mr Speaker, honestly —

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

Several members interjected.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** You are an embarrassment. Look at you; you are an embarrassment!

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members, I will take a word from the previous Speaker: the wall of noise is starting to pick up. Just keep it quiet, because I know you want to hear what the Premier has to say.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** We are working with industry to create jobs in Western Australia. On Friday, the Ministers for Tourism and Regional Development and I chaired an engagement process with the tourism industry, in which a large number of senior representatives of the tourism industry met in my office to talk about the ideas they would like to see to take the tourism industry forward in Western Australia. There were representatives from the Australian Hotels Association, the Tourism Council, Perth Airport, Crown Perth, the Perth Convention Bureau, academia, small business and the regions. It was chaired by an eminent Australian, Mr Sam Walsh, who told *The West Australian* after Friday's event, and I quote —

It will help jobs, it will help the State forward and I've got to say with the discussion we just had there was very good engagement ...

That is what Sam Walsh had to say about it.

It came up with a range of ideas that the relevant ministers and I will progress to make sure that the tourism industry in Perth and across Western Australia is advanced, because that is what we need to do. The ideas that were discussed included extra flights; a focus on interstate tourism, which was neglected; red tape reduction; marketing and events dollars; extra product for Western Australia; and better branding for Western Australia, among numerous others. When we actually sit down and work with industry, we get better outcomes. That is what this government is doing. The previous government was too arrogant to even sit down with industry because it always thought it knew best; whereas, we are prepared to sit down with industry and come up with good ideas to take the state forward and create more jobs and opportunities for our citizens.