

BUSINESS INVESTMENT GROWTH

474. Mr R.C. KUCERA to the Minister for State Development:

I take this opportunity to thank Chris Judd for the six years of joy he gave us while playing for the Eagles and I wish him all the best.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: Would the minister outline the massive growth in business investment in Western Australia and explain what the government is doing to ensure that our state's long-term future is secure?

Mr E.S. RIPPER replied:

I thank the member for Yokine very much for his question. He, at least, is in touch with the massive level of business investment that is occurring in this state and that is powering ahead our economic growth. I was pleased to see confirmation of that level of business investment in *Western Australian BusinessNews*, in the edition that was published on my birthday. On the front page of that edition was indeed a birthday present: "A record 38 major resource and infrastructure projects worth \$49 billion currently underway in Western Australia", says *BusinessNews*. What a good headline to read! It is good to see that on this side of the house, everyone is aware of the level of business investment that we are experiencing - \$105 billion of business investment in the past five years, and \$142 billion worth of projects under consideration. However, that awareness has apparently arrived on the other side of the house only recently.

Recently, the Leader of the Opposition was interviewed by Russell Woolf about his "little tour up north", to use Russell Woolf's words, and he said -

... it's now about the third or fourth time I've been up and had a look. So it's starting to sink in, Russell.

It is starting to sink in! The economy is now 80 per cent bigger than when the Leader of the Opposition was a member of the Court cabinet, and it is just starting to sink in! Well, unfortunately, that attitude on the Liberal side of politics is not confined to Western Australia. It is also an attitude that we find in the federal government. Peter Costello gets seven times more from a standard resource project than the government of Western Australia gets. Peter Costello gets \$5 billion of his budget surplus from Western Australia. However, he invests that \$5 billion surplus, which is generated in Western Australia, not in the most prosperous and most prolific exporting state, but in the slower growing states. The federal government does not invest very much in infrastructure at all, even despite that \$5 billion subsidy from Western Australia to the rest of the country. The federal government's investment in infrastructure nationally is \$317 per capita. The government of Western Australia's investment in infrastructure in this state is \$2 154 per capita. Compare those figures: \$317 per capita from Peter Costello for infrastructure to keep the growth going, \$2 154 per capita from the state of Western Australia. The commonwealth is missing in action when it comes to keeping the growth going in Western Australia. It takes the cash and spends it elsewhere. It does not reinvest it in this state. The commonwealth does not listen to our arguments about our share of our growth. It does not understand that Western Australians know that they are not getting a fair share of the economic development that is taking place in this state. However, Kevin Rudd does know. Kevin Rudd has listened. That is why the federal opposition has promised that 25 per cent of the Gorgon royalties will be put into a dedicated Western Australian infrastructure fund. The total amount that will go into that fund will be \$100 million a year for 30 years. That is a pretty sizeable commitment to Western Australia from the federal opposition. That is recognition that Western Australia is providing 35 per cent of the nation's exports. That is recognition of the validity of reinvesting that money in the most prosperous and prolific state in terms of exports. The federal opposition has understood and has listened. Out-of-touch John Howard and out-of-touch Peter Costello have not.