

AUSTRALIAN TECHNICAL COLLEGE - FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSAL

**209. Mr A.P. O'GORMAN to the Minister for Education and Training:**

I noticed that an article was published in *The West Australian* recently about the likelihood that the federal government will establish an Australian technical college in Joondalup. I also note that the minister recently announced a new trade training facility in Clarkson. Will the minister advise the house on what he knows about the federal government's proposal?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

I thank the member for Joondalup for the question, and what a reasoned and sensible question it was.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, members!

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** You gave it to him!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I had no knowledge of it before I walked into this place today.

This government has achieved a breathtaking performance in training over the past six years. We have doubled the former Liberal government's performance on the number of people in apprenticeships and traineeships. Thirty-four thousand Western Australians are engaged in apprenticeships or traineeships around the state, and 80 000 Western Australians are students at TAFE colleges. What is the commonwealth doing? It is establishing Australian technical colleges around the country. It basically gets out a big map and looks at the margins for the federal seats and, depending on the margin of the federal electorates, puts a college here or there. Of course, the federal electorate of Canning will receive a college, and now it looks as though the federal government will build one in Joondalup in the federal electorate of Moore to help the federal member for Moore and the Liberal candidate for Cowan. However, does the commonwealth government take account of what is underway in that area and what might be needed in the industry and of the fact that we are building a TAFE facility at Clarkson? No, it does not; it just plonks these colleges wherever. I would have thought that the commonwealth would talk to the people in the know in the industry and to the state training bodies, but it does not. It just puts these colleges wherever it sees a political advantage and says that it is addressing the skills crisis. The technical college in Armadale has a total of 62 students. That is the commonwealth's effort to address the skills shortage. There are 80 000 students in our TAFE system and 34 000 students in apprenticeships and traineeships, but the commonwealth has 62 students in its system at a massive additional cost per student. Members can see who is achieving the real runs in training.