

BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY — TRAINING

925. Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY to the Minister for Training:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's significant investment in innovative training initiatives to address skill shortages facing local economies.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how these new initiatives such as the free bricklaying job-ready program are boosting the pipeline of skilled workers in the building and construction industry?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how these programs are allowing the construction of more homes for Western Australians?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for the question. Suffice to say that the Cook government's investment into training is “paving” the way for building and construction careers and “cementing” a boost for the housing supply across the state. Just last week, I met a group of bricklayers in training. I was at North Metropolitan TAFE's Clarkson campus with the local member, Mark Folkard. Those bricklayers in training told us that after completing the bricklaying job-ready program, they had all secured apprenticeships, helping to meet the strong demand for bricklayers in the local building and construction industry.

The job-ready program is part of the Cook government's fee-free training initiative, and was developed in consultation with Western Australian industries to deliver short, sharp training and some wraparound support for entry-level job seekers and others who want to get a taste and try to get their foot in the door with different industries. It has been an incredible success. On completion of the job-ready program, which can be as quick as three weeks, participants are directly connected with opportunities to transition into employment, to undertake an apprenticeship or traineeship with a participating employer or to go into more formal training if they want to increase their skills. Since its inception, the job-ready program has had over 2 500 participants, about half of whom have secured employment in the industry that they have worked in or gone on to further training. I am pleased that about 440 of those commencements have been in the bricklaying job-ready program.

As members know, we are doing everything we can to boost housing supply and affordability in Western Australia. My job in that equation is to make sure we have the skilled labour to do the work, whether that is entry-level bricklaying or the finishing trades with cementing, tiling and the like. We are doing everything we can across the continuum. The job-ready program is available across a range of different industries to ensure that Western Australians, particularly people from the vulnerable cohorts—those who have not had any experience, or a good experience, in the workforce—can access affordable training to help them get jobs. To date, about one-third of participants have been women, about 30 per cent have been under 25 years of age and 19 per cent have been Aboriginal. Pleasingly, a quarter of the participants have undertaken training in regional areas.

One of the people we met during our visit to the Clarkson campus was 17-year-old Dylan Campbell, who had completed the job-ready program —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please, members!

Ms S.F. McGURK: Dylan had completed the job-ready program at Clarkson TAFE. He went on to do a pre-apprenticeship and is now three months into his apprenticeship with ABN Group. It was great to meet him. Dylan said he was in school but he was not enjoying it. I do not imagine school enjoyed him, either. He said that he was not going anywhere, so he got into the job-ready program. He said, “Once I started laying bricks, I realised that I loved it. You get to just look at what you've done and after you've finished doing a job, it just makes you feel good.” He gave a shout-out to the partner organisations, the Housing Industry Association and Brick and Block Careers, that are helping to deliver the program. He acknowledged Rebecca at Brick and Block Careers who helped him with his job-ready program, and Dee at ABN Group who helped him to get an apprenticeship.

It was a hot day out in Clarkson laying bricks. I had a go at it.

Mr D.A. Templeman: How did you go?

Ms S.F. McGURK: Not very well. I joke, but I think I need a TAFE course in all these things. I came home with some very credible cement on my trousers; it was good.

It was great to meet Dylan. It is great to meet the people who support young people like Dylan to get a foot in the door to industries and who love their new careers, traineeships and apprenticeships. In the end, we will have more skilled Western Australians producing housing in our state.

The SPEAKER: The member for North West Central with the last question.