

RESOURCES SECTOR — WORKFORCE

**1006. Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:**

I note that resources sector jobs under the McGowan government have continued to increase for the third successive year, with record numbers announced once again. Can the minister please explain how the McGowan government is supporting employment in Western Australia's resources sector?

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:**

Thank you very much, member; I appreciate the question. Of course, the member represents an area of significant mining activity in the south west of Western Australia. People in the state often think of the Pilbara as being the only place in which mining takes place. Of course, the iron ore sector is our dominant industry in the mining sector but we have many other successful and globally significant mining activities such as the production of mineral sands and the bauxite industry, which is in the member's electorate. The member's electorate also has significant construction material activity, which is critical to Western Australia and our continued growth.

As the member explained, I note that this year we now have for the third year in a row an increase in employment with over 124 000 people employed in the mining sector in 2018–19. I want to contrast that with the height of the boom. We all remember the mining construction boom, as it is called. In 2013–14, 107 871 people were employed in the industry. Let me make it clear that 17 000 more people are employed in the mining sector in Western Australia today, or at least in the last financial year, than were employed at the height of the boom. This is a great success and one of the reasons that jobs growth is happening in Western Australia. The McGowan government is very proud to continue to partner with industry to see this continued growth. Just as an example, we have put the exploration incentives scheme into the activities of the department. In the past it was funded outside the department only from year to year. Now it is a key activity of the agency.

The future battery industry strategy has created 5 000 extra jobs in the battery industry since the government changed. We have supported the new potash industry by providing a new structure for its tenement rental fees so that that industry can come into production. We have provided certainty for the onshore petroleum industry through our scientific inquiry and our regulatory activity in that space. I note that the National Party does not support us in that ongoing work to support the onshore petroleum industry. I am looking forward to hearing what the position of the Liberal Party is and whether it supports the onshore oil and gas industry or joins the Nationals WA in opposing the onshore oil and gas industry. Streamline WA is working with industry to ensure that our already globally leading approvals system is improved further. I note that we have already identified a number of opportunities for a parallel approvals process to shorten the time line of the world's best regulatory framework that we have here in Western Australia to make it even better again. Because there are more applications for programs of work and environmental approvals and more activity in the mining sector in Western Australia now than at any time in our history, we have also allocated additional resources so more staff are available to do the approvals to make sure that we meet our key time lines.

The Western Australian McGowan government is very proud to partner with industry to create these extra opportunities for Western Australian workers. Over 124 000 people are now able to enjoy high-wage, high-skill jobs because we are working together with industry to make every post a winner.