

TRADE RELATIONS

1017. Ms J.J. SHAW to the Premier:

Before I begin, can I acknowledge the firefighters currently responding to an emergency situation in Bullsbrook. I wish them every safety. My thoughts, and I am sure all of our thoughts, are with the people affected in that area.

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to growing the Western Australian economy by building and maintaining strong relationships with our key trading partners. Can the Premier outline to the house how this government's strong trade relationships are delivering a stronger economy, helping create jobs and delivering confidence to business?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. A strong Western Australian economy depends on strong trading relationships with our key trading partners, particularly in Asia. That is why as Premier and as a government we have gone to huge efforts to keep those relationships strong. As Premier of the state for the last two and a half years, I have visited China on a number of occasions, Japan on two occasions, and South Korea, for a range of government and other business engagements. Last week, I visited India for the same purpose and took a delegation, as I said earlier, to take up issues related to tourism students and also the resources and LNG sectors. If we have stronger relationships, we can deliver a stronger Western Australian economy.

The latest trade figures show even more signs for Western Australians to be optimistic about the economy. The value of Western Australian exports hit a record high. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, WA has exported \$175.5 billion worth of goods in the past 12 months. That is a massive increase of 28.4 per cent; the highest annual growth since 2011. Our share of Australia's exports is now at a four-and-a-half-year high. These figures show the importance of Western Australia's relationship with China. Annual exports to China are at a record high. They have grown by more than 44 per cent—the highest growth since 2011. China accounts for 52.3 per cent of all Western Australian exports—a record high. Over \$82 billion worth of exports go to China. That is about a quarter of the Western Australian economy and hundreds of thousands of jobs are dependent upon that trading relationship.

I do get a little frustrated when I hear some irresponsible commentary by some federal Liberal ministers and MPs. It is, in effect, putting hundreds of thousands of Western Australian jobs at risk. Hundreds and hundreds, if not thousands, of Western Australian businesses rely upon these strong relationships. That is why it is important the government maintains and strengthens these relationships. That is one of the reasons we are seeing higher business confidence under this government. The latest NAB business survey states that business confidence in Western Australia is the highest in the country by a long, long way. It is considerably higher than in New South Wales and in contrast with other states where confidence is now negative. Business conditions in Western Australia are now second in Australia and considerably higher than the Australian average. That was according to the NAB business survey. The government is determined to continue to provide that confidence and committed to ensuring that there is confidence to invest in our state. That is why we are ensuring that our relationship with our trading partners remains strong, which I would hope all members of this house would endorse.