

SKILLS FORMATION TASKFORCE

1174. Hon SHELLEY ARCHER to the Minister for Education and Training:

Can the minister advise the house on the recommendations of the Skills Formation Taskforce?

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH replied:

I thank the member for such an outstanding question and thank her for her very keen interest in all training matters. I welcome the Skills Formation Taskforce report because it calls for less paperwork and more support for employers. I am sure that all members opposite agree that that is a good objective. Employers will find it easier to take on apprentices and there will be a reduction in red tape. I thank Hon Clive Brown for his contribution as the chair of the task force, and task force members for delivering a comprehensive report that offers a blueprint for the future of training in Western Australia. The government has already taken action to implement many of the findings. The apprenticeship nominal duration for more than 30 trades has been reduced from four to three or three and a half years. In addition, 11 innovative new two-year trades have been specifically introduced into the housing sector. Yesterday this house passed a bill to allow part-time school-based apprenticeships, which will create even more flexible arrangements for both employers and the wider community.

The task force made 53 recommendations in total on how the current system needs to change. This, of course, followed extensive consultation throughout the state. We went everywhere. All stakeholders were entitled to have their say on the best way forward, and that is exactly what happened, because the government wants a world-class apprenticeship and traineeship system to operate in Western Australia.

The key recommendations of this report call for greater engagement of indigenous students by delivering flexible training options that incorporate work-related readiness, literacy and numeracy. I am confident that that will result in the best training system in the world. In the first step in addressing these issues, the government has allocated \$9.7 million over the next three years to assist indigenous people. Group training organisations already employ 450 indigenous apprentices and trainees. This is expected to rise to 1 130 by 2009 - an increase of 150 per cent. In addition, the highly successful Aboriginal school-based traineeship initiative will be expanded. We will be aiming for an additional 2 175 commencements over the next three years, which will increase the annual intake from 685 to 1 700 places a year. The most recent National Centre for Vocational Education Research figures show that Western Australia is leading the nation in this area. From March 2006, 56 per cent of people in WA were in training in traditional apprenticeships compared with only 39 per cent nationally. WA apprenticeship and traineeship numbers currently stand at 32 400 and we are well on track to achieve the new target we set - we had already met the old target - of 32 700 by 2009. Members opposite are quiet because they all know that the Carpenter government is determined to create a highly skilled work force so that it can meet the challenges of our booming economy. This allocation just goes to demonstrate that the government has put its money where its mouth is.

HON BARRY HOUSE: I do not have a question, but two of my questions have not yet been answered.

The PRESIDENT: Yes.