OFFICE OF DIGITAL GOVERNMENT — CYBER WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING PROGRAM

Statement by Minister for Innovation and ICT

MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean — Minister for Innovation and ICT) [9.14 am]: I rise to inform the house that the next cohort of cyber work integrated learning students from Western Australian universities and TAFEs have begun their internships in the Office of Digital Government's cybersecurity unit. I recently met with this fantastic group of students, whose internship will see them working with a number of state government agencies to provide technical support for cybersecurity initiatives, as well as conducting technical research and development. The internship runs for the duration of the students' final semester and provides fantastic opportunity for our future cybersecurity professionals to put their STEM skills into practice.

Since 2019, the Office of Digital Government—DGov—has benefited from the placement of more than 30 high-performing students to assist with a program of work to improve cybersecurity across the sector. The students gain valuable skills and experience to bridge the gap from completing their studies to real-life scenarios. Students provide technical support to DGov and are also placed in other agencies in the public sector, helping to accelerate cybersecurity maturity across government.

Western Australia is a world leader in the cybersecurity industry, and this program is an important pathway to ensure that government and industry have experienced graduates with the practical STEM skills they need to be job-ready. Many former students are now employed in the public sector, and it is a great promotion of where studying STEM can take them.

The McGowan government has also recently launched the Take 2 STEM campaign to promote to students and parents the importance of building skills in science, technology, engineering and maths. As Western Australia begins its economic recovery from the global COVID-19 pandemic, Take 2 STEM and fantastic state government initiatives such as the cybersecurity internship aim to provide the skills and experience to position our young people for the jobs of the future. As we have learnt through the COVID-19 pandemic, skills such as problem solving, creative thinking and innovation are vital in responding to modern challenges.