

SCHOOLS — CAPITAL WORKS

287. Ms M.M. QUIRK to the Minister for Education:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's \$1.6 billion investment in school infrastructure in the upcoming state budget.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how this record investment will deliver both new and improved infrastructure at public schools across Western Australia?
- (2) Can the minister advise what this will mean for students, teachers and families across Western Australia?

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Landsdale for her question. She has long been an advocate for quality public education in Western Australia. Before I get onto the substance of the member's question, and with regard to teachers, it is fantastic that there has been an in-principle agreement by the executive to put to the members this fantastic offer that we have made. It goes to us respecting the value of teachers and principals and our public education system. I thank the Minister for Industrial Relations for the way that she has negotiated that agreement. Thank you very much.

I am glad that the member asked me this question. Last week, I had the pleasure of joining the Premier, the member for Jandakot and Hon Stephen Pratt, MLC, at the fantastic Piara Waters Senior High School to announce another significant investment in public education. We announced that in tomorrow's budget that the Treasurer will bring down—a fantastic budget; only one more sleep—we will be investing a further \$410 million in Western Australian school infrastructure. We are also committing to a \$1.6 billion investment over the forward estimates in infrastructure in our public school system. That means we will be building on WA Labor government's record \$4.4 billion education infrastructure investment since 2017—phenomenal! No government previously has achieved such an investment in our public education infrastructure. This list is long, but I will try to keep it short because I do want to break the record that the Minister for Health might have just set. It includes \$88.4 million for three new public primary schools to open in 2027; \$73.2 million for stage 2 of the Piara Waters Senior High School development; \$28.4 million towards the construction of two new primary schools within Wellard East and Wungong; \$26.5 million for a double-storey block at Caversham Primary School; \$21.8 million for the relocation of Mount Hawthorn Education Support Centre to Lake Monger Primary School; \$15 million for fast-track planning for a new secondary school in Brabham; \$2.4 million for planning for a number of schools including Como Secondary College and also, member for Roe, Esperance Senior High School; and a \$12 million investment for new two-storey modular classroom block for Highgate Primary School.

Since 2017 when Labor was returned to government in Western Australia, we have opened 32 new primary schools with two more to open in 2025, while 10 new high schools have also been built. I mentioned the investment in Highgate Primary School and the enrolment pressures. There has been great local advocacy there by the member for Perth. Last Wednesday, 1 May, I noticed there was an article in *The West Australian* titled "Supersizing the city" in which the Lord Mayor of Perth talks about his unashamed desire for more residents in the City of Perth to be achieved through an increase in plot ratios, including a 152 per cent increase in Claisebrook and a 62 per cent increase in East Perth. The Lord Mayor said —

We all know that having more people living and working in the city supports business, supports a vibrant capital city and community."

I could not agree with him more. However, I think some of those people living there might have children who need to go to a primary school. We as a government are prepared—ready to go. We will create a fantastic new primary school in East Perth. The only thing stopping us is the City of Perth. The Lord Mayor keeps saying that maybe the minister should be taken away from negotiations. Does he not understand that I am not freewheeling on this? This is the government's position. We are solid behind what we believe is right for East Perth and the state of Western Australia. We are ready to start this fantastic investment in East Perth. The Lord Mayor and the City of Perth talk about a partnership. What are they bringing to the partnership? Nothing. We are prepared to invest over \$100 million in a public primary school in East Perth, plus unlock the potential of up to \$27.5 million on a block of land that we will return to the city, which at the moment can be used only for a car park. Once again, I ask the City of Perth to come to the table and work in partnership with us because this is a government that is prepared to invest in infrastructure for public schools, whether they are in the inner city, outer part of the metropolitan region or the country area. We stand here on a great record and tomorrow's budget will confirm that.