

## INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2021

### *Second Reading*

Resumed from 24 June.

**MR S.A. MILLMAN (Mount Lawley — Parliamentary Secretary)** [4.13 pm]: I rise, in the shadow of that momentous occasion, to make a very brief contribution on the Industry and Technology Development Amendment Bill 2021. As I stand to make this contribution, I reflect on what is often stated as the McGowan government's number one priority: WA jobs. In looking at the way this government has conducted itself over the first term in office from 2017 through to 2021, and ever since we were re-elected in 2021, members can see the unwavering commitment of the WA government to do everything it can to promote job growth. When I look at the statistics that were quoted in question time today, with an unemployment rate at an astounding 4.1 per cent, it can be seen that the shoulder-to-the-wheel work that has been done is delivering dividends. Those dividends are for the benefit of the Western Australian community. Members would think that those efforts would be congratulated by the conservative parties in Western Australia. I thought they would be happy about the fact that our economy is in such good shape. I thought they would be happy about the way in which this government tackled the COVID-19 pandemic. I thought they would be supportive of the efforts that we have made in order to try to improve the livelihoods of everyday Australians. Members opposite stand condemned for undermining the efforts that we have put in. Yet again today we have heard them attack the McGowan Labor government for doing precisely the sort of work that is necessary to diversify our economy, to create jobs and to make sure that our community remains safe from the threat of COVID.

The Industry and Technology Development Amendment Bill is another regulatory endeavour designed to unleash the potential of Western Australia. I am going to define a couple of terms at the outset of my contribution so that people can stay with me as I go through some important points, and then I will speak about why this amendment bill is so important and what it will do to meet that government objective of creating WA jobs.

The Industry and Technology Development Act 1988 is a very old act when it comes to industry and technology. An important purpose of the ITD act is for the state government to administer the NAIF—Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility. Sorry about all these acronyms. The NAIF, which is a commonwealth facility, is administered by the state government under the auspices of the ITD act. As the ITD act is currently cast, it prevents the NAIF from being administered in a way that provides money for investment to government trading enterprises. I hope members can keep track of the ITD, the NAIF and the GTEs!

By bringing this legislation before Parliament, the McGowan government is hoping to unlock the potential for investment in northern Australia—in that part of the western third of northern Australia where there is so much potential. Unless and until these amendments pass, the ability of the state government to use the investment vehicles of GTEs such as the Water Corporation and Western Power and so on and so forth is constrained. The leveraging opportunities that might exist by coordinating our investment with commonwealth investment to unleash potential, and driving that investment through the GTEs, are opportunities that are being denied to us by the current structure of the legislation.

This is important legislation because it realises a potential for investing in critical capital in order to try to grow our economy. Let me rephrase that. If we are going to continue the excellent job growth that we have already demonstrated over the first five years of the McGowan government, we will need to diversify the economy. The reliance on a narrow set of industries exporting to a narrow set of markets is not sustainable in the long term. Not only do we need to create jobs for the present, but we also need to create jobs for the future. We need to be looking at ways to encourage industries to participate in Western Australia. We need to encourage industries in the renewable energy sector. We need to encourage industries in the hydrogen sector and we need to encourage industries in the Pilbara.

Recently I was very fortunate to be at an event organised by the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation. It was called India Connect and was one of those events at which industry, business, government and community come together to look at ways in which the relationship between Western Australia and India could be deepened and expanded. The Deputy Premier was there and gave an incredible speech. A great entrepreneur, a great investor in Western Australia was there, who feels passionately about advancing the cause of Western Australia and doing so in a way that is sensitive to his Indian roots. I am talking, of course, about Vikas Rambal, the managing director of Perdaman Chemicals and Fertilisers Pty Ltd. He came to Western Australia to seek a new life and to make his fortune. In so doing, he has contributed much back to the community. Perdaman Chemicals and Fertilisers Pty Ltd is planning to construct a \$4.5 billion, 2.1-million tonne per annum urea production facility in the Burrup strategic industrial area. This project is expected to create over 2 500 construction jobs and 200 permanent operation jobs. However, significant investment in infrastructure upgrades is needed to support the project. This includes

a \$172 million expansion of the Dampier cargo wharf at the port of Dampier and a \$99 million investment to expand the Water Corporation's Burrup seawater supply scheme.

This endeavour by Perdaman Chemicals and Fertilisers was subject to a proposal to cabinet, or the Expenditure Review Committee, and project finance from the Water Corporation and the Pilbara Ports Authority to fund the infrastructure upgrades to support the project. It has been recommended that the Minister for State Development in consultation with the Premier progress the drafting of amendments to the ITD act to enable the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility to lend to government trading enterprises. We will try to keep track!

This is precisely the sort of example of combining entrepreneurialism and endeavour—values the Liberal Party used to hold dear—with commonwealth government investment, private capital and state government money through our GTEs. The opportunity to unleash this incredible potential that will drive the creation of many jobs can be done only in the right regulatory environment. That is why the amendments to this legislation are very important. That is just one example. Perdaman expects to take a final investment decision for the project in late 2021, but it will require finance and equity agreements to be well developed. I was really disappointed to hear some of the contributions from members opposite about the state's endeavour in relation to hydrogen. I cannot recall the last time we had a cabinet-level representation for the hydrogen industry.

**Dr D.J. Honey:** Not as disappointed as the shadow minister for hydrogen way before you guys even thought about it.

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** Yes, brilliant—as shadow minister. Do you know what, member?

**Dr D.J. Honey:** What?

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** Do you know how I know you are not ready for government? It is because you are still so hopeless at opposition. Once you figure out how to be a good opposition, you might start working towards being an alternative government.

**Dr D.J. Honey** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** For the first time ever, because we are in government, and it will be a long time before the Leader of the Liberal Party will be, I suspect, we have a minister responsible for hydrogen. The member for Cottesloe's party never had one when he was in government. He was in government for eight and a half years. He does not know what is coming over the horizon. He is so busy being stuck in the 1950s that he cannot see the potential.

**Dr D.J. Honey** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** One of the things I find amazing about the WA Liberal Party is the extent to which it has its head in the sand. This is a Liberal Party that criticised the state government for the decision of a publicly listed company that is not part of the government to invest in Queensland to develop its hydrogen strategy. Fundamentally undermining the ability —

**Dr D.J. Honey** interjected.

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** For goodness sake!

Fundamentally undermining the government's ability to progress its strategy for renewable energy and hydrogen was the fact that completely blindsiding the state government and investors, the federal Liberal government rejected the Asian Renewable Energy Hub. It gave us an absolute kick in the teeth.

**Dr D.J. Honey:** Why?

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** It is because it has no vision; it has no idea. This Attorney General yesterday defeated Clive Palmer in the High Court, saving the people of Western Australia \$30 billion that we would have had to pay because of the mistakes of Colin Barnett at Balmoral South. It is the Attorney General who has saved Western Australia \$30 billion. I know the conservatives are dark about that; they are grumpy about it because they are on the same side as Clive Palmer. Does the Leader of the Liberal Party know how I know that? They are the ones who jumped into the helicopter with him and flew around the Pilbara and then took a donation.

**Dr D.J. Honey** interjected.

**Ms M.M. Quirk** interjected.

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** Sorry, Margaret!

Then the conservatives say, "Do you know what you should look to as your gold standard when it comes to investment decisions and financial management and managing COVID? Look to New South Wales." What an

outrageous proposition. What an incredible proposition—look to New South Wales! We are celebrating the fact that the Western Australian economy is doing better than that in any other jurisdiction. We have a trajectory of state debt going down and a budget in surplus. The member should look at the billions of dollars that the New South Wales state government is now ponying up to attract multinational corporations into its community. It is facing an \$8.6 billion deficit on its budget this year, with state debt projected to hit \$104 billion at the end of the forward estimates in 2024–25, at exactly the same time as the sound fiscal management, the responsible financial management, of the McGowan government will see the massive deficit and debt legacy disaster left to us by the irresponsible Liberal and National Parties being paid down.

**Dr D.J. Honey** interjected.

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** Does the member know what the biggest risk for the financial sustainability of Western Australia is? It is the Liberal and National Parties because every day they have come in here, they have not found a problem that they cannot fix by throwing billions of dollars at it. This is the Liberal and National Parties. I do not talk about this to people in Mt Lawley because they are still furious with the Liberal and National Parties. The Liberal and National Parties tried to fix the revenue stream because they could not get expenditure under control. Revenue and expenditure, member for Cottesloe, go together to figure out the state's finances—something he should pay attention to. The Liberals and Nationals could not fix their expenditure problems—their addiction to spending money—so they tried to fix the revenue side. Does the member know what the Liberal Party did, which was a complete abandonment of its principles? It increased land tax three times. Poor old Hon Michael Sutherland, the former member for Mount Lawley, decried the fact that his Liberal Party had abandoned its foundational principles. The member for Cottesloe, the comrade from Cottesloe, the Bolshevik of the beaches, is still there asking us to spend money all over the place. Vladimir Lenin from Vans cafe wants to spend money all over the place—more capital, more state money and higher taxes. The Liberal Party does not believe in anything anymore. It will never be ready for government

**Ms M.M. Quirk:** What about the Marx from Mosman Park?

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** Do members remember Marx from Mosman Park? Members opposite will never be ready for government until they figure out, first, how to be in opposition and, second, what they stand for. They have completely lost the plot and the idea of what we should be doing, whereas the Labor government is the one unleashing the potential of capital. We are the ones encouraging entrepreneurialism and innovation.

We have our Medical Research Future Fund and our new innovation fund. We are looking at ways to diversify the economy. Do members know what the previous government did? It put an albatross around the neck of people looking for work by increasing TAFE fees for courses like childcare to above \$10 000. When we think about how little the federal government puts into childcare, what prospective care worker is going to burden themselves with an extraordinary debt in order to make a contribution back to society? We absolutely need to remove all the impediments to people pursuing those new jobs in the caring industry, the age and disability sector, and the early childhood education sector. We need to remove the impediments and make sure that people have access to those jobs. The only way we can do that is through sound financial management, which gives us the headspace to take the necessary steps to cut the cost of education and provide access to TAFE for more and more people. But we are not just doing it in a way that improves the economy.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Get back to those acronyms, member!

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** I am almost done. There were scandalous suggestions made by the member for North West Central in question time today, propositions that really do not behove him. He should not be pursuing that line of argument—I do not think it reflects well on him at all—but if he wants to talk about community safety or law and order, he should look at just two things that we are doing.

*Point of Order*

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** Point of order, Deputy Speaker. Please!

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** It is okay. Thank you, Leader of the Liberal Party. I am sure that you are leading back to those acronyms, member for Mount Lawley, and to industry and technology.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** I will bring my contribution to an end right now, Deputy Speaker. What I say is this: firstly, we are spending money in the budget to provide for boots on the ground and police on the frontline. That is material support. Secondly, we are providing the legislative support. This brave Attorney General is taking on outlaw motorcycle gangs and putting in place precisely the policy prescription that the Western Australia Police Force has asked for in order to tackle the scourge of outlaw motorcycle gangs. That is on the back of us tackling the scourge of meth in our first term, something that Hon Peter Collier says is not a priority. This is a whole picture. This Labor government understands that these things are all connected. If we take away the supply of meth, we have fewer

people addicted to drugs; then, if we provide them the opportunity of going to TAFE, we give them the opportunity to find the jobs of the future.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Those industry and technology development jobs, yes.

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** This is the latest piece of the puzzle of a government that knows exactly how to put the right regulatory framework in place to unleash the potential of capital and to provide for the job and education opportunities of the future. That is why I have absolutely no hesitation in commending this bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr D.A. Templeman (Leader of the House)**.

*House adjourned at 4.30 pm*

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