

**Division 25: Training and Workforce Development, \$524 036 000 —**

Ms R.S. Stephens, Chair.

Mr T.J. Healy, Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Education and Training.

Ms K. Ho, Director General.

Ms G. Husk, Acting Executive Director, Service Delivery.

Ms J. Wallace, Executive Director, Policy, Planning and Innovation.

Mr G. Thompson, Executive Director, Corporate.

Ms R. Trotter, Acting Chief Finance Officer.

Mr R. Brown, Executive Director, Service Resource Management.

[Witnesses introduced.]

**The CHAIR:** The estimates committees will be reported by Hansard and the daily proof will be available online as soon as possible within two business days. The chair will allow as many questions as possible. Questions and answers should be short and to the point. Consideration is restricted to items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. Questions must relate to a page number, item or amount related to the current division, and members should preface their questions with these details. Some divisions are the responsibility of more than one minister. Ministers shall only be examined in relation to their portfolio responsibilities. A minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee. I will ask the minister to clearly indicate what information they agree to provide and will then allocate a reference number. Supplementary information shall be provided to the principal clerk by close of business Friday, 3 June 2022. If a minister suggests that a matter be put on notice, members should use the online questions on notice system.

Member for Roe, do you have a question?

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** Thank you, chair. My first question relates to page 385, paragraph 4 under “Labour Market Conditions.” The WA skills summit highlighted the need for greater opportunity for underutilised segments of the labour force. What were the direct outcomes of the skills summit held on 30 July last year?

**Mr T.J. HEALY:** A number of outcomes have come through and for the expedience of time, I will just list the names. There has been a JobSeeker program for ex-offenders to gain employment; a targeted advertising campaign to bring people to Western Australia; a program for Aboriginal youth to overcome barriers to employment; caring for country pilot programs; job-ready programs; and drivers’ licence programs. There have been a number of things. The Kings Park skills summit was supplemented by 10 regional skills summits, so it was not just city based. It identified a number of very good ideas and concepts, and a number of them have been made available. I will probably be happy to provide some further information but I am conscious of the time. If you would like further supplementary information I am happy to provide.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** How many skilled migrants have entered WA in 2022?

**The CHAIR:** Can I just clarify, member for Roe? Did you want to supplementary information on that or do you want to put it on notice?

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I am happy to receive supplementary information, yes.

**Mr T.J. HEALY:** I will provide supplementary information but I will answer the question. I am happy to provide the programs that have been announced since the skills summit. Was that the question?

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** How many skilled migrants have entered WA?

**Mr T.J. HEALY:** No; supplementary information related to the skills summit. The member will have to refer to a line item for his question on how many skilled migrants have entered the state.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** In 2022, yes.

**The CHAIR:** Excuse me, parliamentary secretary. I need to clarify this for Hansard.

[*Supplementary Information No B12.*]

**The CHAIR:** Continue on that next question, member for Roe.

[11.50 am]

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** Has the department forecast which industries will have the greatest skills shortages in 2022–23? In which particular industries and areas has it forecast shortages?

**Mr T.J. HEALY:** The member will have to refer to a budget line item for that.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I am looking under “Labour Market Conditions”.

**Mr T.J. HEALY:** So the question is: which areas does the government identify as having the greatest need?

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** That is correct. Which particular areas have been identified as having the major skills shortages?

**Mr T.J. HEALY:** For the expedience of time, I will pass to the director general, but this is not the right location for the question.

**Ms K. Ho:** Thank you for the question. The department has a range of strategies that it uses to understand the skills needs of the state, and it includes collecting a lot of labour market data, surveying industry and then testing the results of the surveys and the labour market research with industry through the industry training councils that are funded by the department to provide advice. Through that process, a state priority occupation list is developed annually, which is the basis on which the skills needs are determined for purchasing training delivery, as well as skilled migration policy settings in the state-nominated migration program. Most people will understand there are skill shortages in the state in a whole range of industries, occupations and regions. It is fairly widespread, from aged care, disability, community services and the construction industry. Really, we are seeing shortages over a wide range. Our tight labour market conditions are caused by the strong economy and a couple of years of closed borders. It is not confined to Western Australia. There is a national picture of skill shortages.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I think we all know that aged care and child care are probably two of those major areas. What has been identified as a method of addressing them in the short and immediate term?

**Mr T.J. HEALY:** The state government has worked very closely with industry to develop a number of workforce strategies. Firstly, I will address the aged-care component of the member’s question and look across the metropolitan area and regional communities. Even before the McGowan government started managing the pandemic very well—it continues to manage the pandemic very well—the economy continued to grow.

A range of training and workforce strategies have been put in place, including a number of courses. There are 25 courses targeting jobs in the care sector. Of course, this was also found at the skills summits in those regional communities. The courses are targeting the aged-care and disability sectors in the Lower Fees, Local Skills initiative to provide accessible and low-fee training, low-fee existing worker traineeships in aged and disability care, and fee-free training in the direct care skill set course to attract new workers to the sector. I can tell the member that more than 900 students have enrolled in that free skill set course, and 11 other fee-free skill set courses to provide skills for jobs in aged care. Again, I think post the federal election on the weekend, at which aged care was an issue, we are going to see a lot more support, and continuing support, from the federal government for that.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** On page 385, under “Labour Market Conditions”, there is an item about the state-nominated migration program target. It is under the same section and is further to the discussion about how the department will prioritise to alleviate these skill shortages. Does the department make recommendations to cabinet or to government in relation to which of those employment areas should be on the state-nominated migration program; and, if so, has it nominated any that have been rejected by government?

**Mr T.J. HEALY:** I can confirm the department does make recommendations to government, but discussions of cabinet are protected by cabinet-in-confidence.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** So the recommendations of the analysis that the department has just explained around where the shortages are, and the need, are put forward for consideration by government and cabinet ultimately decides which of those areas are allowed in terms of changes to the state-nominated migration program. Have I got that right?

**Mr T.J. HEALY:** I would say that that is overall correct, but the member should remember that the Department of Training and Workforce Development does an incredible job in communicating, but also, like the skills summit as an example, ministers work very closely with industry and with the industry training councils. A number of conversations occur across all our regions in all our industries providing that feedback. That is in addition to all our government departments, which provide that feedback as well. A number of conversations are led, greatly by the Department of Training and Workforce Development, but not in its own silo.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** But, ultimately, is it government that makes the decision around who or what area is on the state-nominated migration program?

**Mr T.J. HEALY:** Yes. The Western Australian government is its own thing.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** That is right, and a whole list of those areas were cut from the state-nominated migration program when the Labor came to government in 2017. There was a whole list of employment areas that were taken off the list.

**Mr T.J. HEALY:** I can confirm that we made election promises in 2017 about what would go onto that list in conversation with the federal government. As the member knows, a lot things evolved—market changes and economic changes—and we evolved with them to meet the needs of the community.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** The government has put them all back on again, has it not?

**Mr T.J. HEALY:** If the member would like to ask questions about which are on there, I am happy to provide an answer.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** No. I can find that list myself, so it is fine.

**Mr T.J. HEALY:** It is there. The member can Google it and it is there.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Correct.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I have a new question.

**The CHAIR:** You will have to be very quick, Member for Roe, given the time.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I wanted to ask about the budget allocation for the mature and ex-offender JobSeeker program.

**The CHAIR:** Actually, I have been advised that we have run out of time, so are you able to put that question on notice?

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** No worries.

**The appropriation was recommended.**