

COLLIE — ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

20. Mr D.T. PUNCH to the Premier:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's record-breaking investment in growing the economy of Collie and creating new long-term, sustainable jobs in the region. Can the Premier update the house on this government's —
Several members interjected.

Mr D.T. PUNCH: Mr Speaker, I cannot hear myself ask the question.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member, start again.

Mr D.T. PUNCH: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's record-breaking investment in growing the economy of Collie and creating new long-term, sustainable jobs in the region. Can the Premier update the house on this government's unprecedented efforts to attract new business and industry to Collie, as well as its efforts in providing more economic opportunities for local businesses and local workers?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

Thank you to the member for Bunbury. He is a great advocate for Bunbury and the south west. If my memory serves me correctly, he may have even lived in Collie for a large part of his life. It is terrific to be able to inform the house of the great initiatives the state is taking to diversify and support the economy and the people of Collie. As I outlined yesterday, we have established a \$60 million industry attraction and development fund and a \$20 million Collie Futures fund. We are already seeing results for the community.

The autonomous technology training facility, which I announced recently with the member for Collie–Preston and the Minister for Regional Development, and Piacentini and Son, and WesTrac—both great Western Australian companies—will be located in Collie. It will be the southern hemisphere's first Caterpillar autonomous technology training facility. It is a world-leading project that will train Western Australians in autonomous technology. As we know, that is happening all over Western Australia and the world. The major training facility for that industry, in the entire southern hemisphere, will be based in Collie because of the actions we took.

The government is supporting Frontline Fire and Rescue Equipment to establish an emergency services vehicle manufacturing facility in Collie. There will be new manufacturing jobs. A major vehicle manufacturer is establishing itself in Collie. When these things are built, they have to be built to the highest of standards, which is why we have to go through a tender process. Otherwise, the lives of volunteers and career firefighters could be put at risk. Therefore, the tender process came up with that result, but we have ensured that a major component will go into Collie.

There will be an \$8 million new Department of Fire and Emergency Services multipurpose bushfire facility in Collie, with an incident control centre, an emergency driver training school and maintenance services for DFES vehicles.

We are investing in tourism. We are putting \$10 million into new mountain biking and bushwalking trails—the Collie adventure trails. I think it will be magnificent, quite frankly.

The SPEAKER: They get everything in Collie!

Mr M. McGOWAN: All around Collie we are supporting —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! This is good news for the member for Collie–Preston.

Mr M. McGOWAN: We are supporting the tourism industry of that community. I think it will be a great tourism attractor.

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Carine, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I think it will bring people from around Australia and, indeed, the world, if we look at other places that have these sorts of opportunities. Last night in the courtyard, I learnt that mountain biking is now the world's fastest growing sport. This is the sort of thing that will bring tourists and the like to Collie.

One project I am very excited about is the mural trail. We will have a range of murals in Collie on various public facilities. Wellington Dam is going to be one of the world's greatest murals. I have an image in my head that could be on the wall of Wellington Dam, and I am looking at him right now—reclining Michelangelo-style on the wall of Wellington Dam! It is a magnificent thing to think about. It could be Michelangelo-style or, to be more modern, Jack Thompson-style—on the wall of Wellington Dam.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr M. McGOWAN: People will come from all over the world to see that! But in any event it will be a magnificent mural. The thing about tourists today is that they are looking for new experiences. Communities that renew their tourism product often attract more people and it can generate a new industry or add to the tourism product of Collie.

On top of that, up to 20 jobs are being established at the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety licensing centre in Collie. We have just opened \$8 million worth of upgrades to Collie Senior High School, spent \$12 million on the redevelopment of Collie Hospital and \$5.7 million on the redevelopment of Lake Kepwari. We do support the regions and we are making sure that important communities are receiving the benefits. It is not just me who is saying this.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, please! Leader of the National Party!

Mr M. McGOWAN: I have an article here from the *Collie Mail* of 12 December. It states —

Liberal MLC Dr Steve Thomas said he admired the economic diversification projects the state government had been implemented in Collie.

“What Alannah Mactiernan is trying to do in diversification for Collie is worthy of support and I think she and I agree the solution (for Collie) is not one easy answer but a larger number of smaller projects,” he said.

That is an important endorsement by Hon Dr Steve Thomas. I note that the week before last, an opposition member was complaining from Bunbury about the government’s commitment to Collie and saying that we are not doing enough. The member did not actually visit Collie to promote her criticisms. She did not take the time to drive up the hill. As the member for Collie–Preston knows, I go there a lot. The evidence is there. This government has done more to support the Collie community than any government in memory to make sure that it has a strong and prosperous future and a diversified economy for that important town.

The SPEAKER: I hope that the dam wall is big enough to fit the member for Collie–Preston’s head on it!