

KICKSTART TRAINING ACADEMY

Statement by Parliamentary Secretary

HON KYLE MCGINN (Mining and Pastoral — Parliamentary Secretary) [1.02 pm]: On 24 March 2023, I represented the Minister for Regional Development at the official opening of bulk haulage and logistics company Fenix–Newhaul’s Kickstart Training Academy in Geraldton. It was great to be joined by the member for Geraldton, Lara Dalton, who was a strong advocate for this project. Through round 5 of the state government’s regional economic development grants, \$250 000 was invested in a world-leading truck driving simulator, which will help to deliver modernised driver training and respond to the changing skills needs of the mining industry. This is leading-edge technology, adapted from an aircraft simulator, that allows learner drivers to train in multi-combination road trains safely without leaving the depot until they achieve a high level of competency. The academy recognises mining and transport’s critical roles as creators of job opportunities in the midwest, including for Aboriginal people, and is working to provide long-term training and job opportunities for local Aboriginal trainees looking for a career on or close to their country. My hosts for the day included Mr John Welborn, chairman of Fenix Resources, and Mr Craig Mitchell, founder of Newhaul.

I greatly enjoyed the opportunity to sit in the genuine dual-seat Mack truck cabin of the simulator. It was an incredibly realistic experience. I was able to speak to four Kickstart youth trainees, Ronald and Kelsey Harris, Lazaris Martin and Joshua McIntosh about their learning journey and career aspirations. I was shown the company’s modern management centre, which features a large media wall for fleet tracking, driver fatigue monitoring and CCTV. I would like to thank Fenix–Newhaul for the invitation to attend and speak, and for its hospitality. Mining is the largest employer and exporter within the midwest region, and Geraldton plays a critical role in the provision of key export infrastructure for resource operations, as well as the supply of support services and skilled labour. Geraldton is increasingly being recognised as a significant skills and training hub to the mining sector, further confirmed with the addition of the academy. This is a great example of the rural economic development grants supporting a locally driven project to diversify the local economy, attract new investment, innovate and provide long-term social and economic benefits to the community.