

SHIPPING TASKFORCE

Statement by Parliamentary Secretary

HON KYLE MCGINN (Mining and Pastoral — Parliamentary Secretary) [1.07 pm]: The WA Shipping and Supply Chain Taskforce was established last year in the wake of flooding events that effectively isolated Perth and most of the state from sources of groceries and other freight. The taskforce was asked to consider how coastal shipping services could be utilised in future to reduce the impact of recurrent floods and fire events and how supply chains could be more resilient.

As co-chair of the taskforce, alongside Ms Jessica Stojkovski, MLA, member for Kingsley and previously Parliamentary Secretary to the former Minister for Ports, I recently submitted our report for the consideration of government. The report has been publicly released and posted to the webpage, which was set up when the taskforce was initiated. Those companies and agencies which made submissions and attended forums have been sent a copy directly and invited to comment.

The report focuses on support for national shipping regulatory reform and policy changes, which are primarily the responsibility of federal government. The states have minimal regulatory roles in the shipping space. There is very little Australian-owned shipping and very few Australians employed on commercial shipping serving the country. We would like to see that change for our national and Western Australia's interest.

Other themes of the report include support for training opportunities for Western Australians on vessels serving Australia, even on vessels that are foreign flagged and crewed; support for supply chain resilience improvements, especially in remote WA regions such as the Kimberley—this could take the form of common-user distribution centres to provide added protection against shortages arising from regular wet season events and cost savings for remote communities; and support for upgrades to the trans-national railway line corridor in view of the floods in 2022 that highlighted our dependence on it. The report also recommends that the Department of Transport establish a shipping and supply chain policy unit within its existing freight–ports policy area to propel the policy initiatives, especially with Canberra. I am pleased to report that this recommendation has already been accepted and is being progressed now.

The federal government has also recently received a report from its Australian Strategic Fleet Taskforce that focused on an announced policy for the acquisition or contracting of a fleet of up to 12 vessels to support the supply of essential goods and services for Australia during times of international unrest or climatic events. Our task is to ensure that we align our need for more substantial coastal trading capacity with the federal government's policy agenda.

I thank the member for Kingsley for her contribution to the report. I will stay involved in the taskforce to continue research and to work with our agencies and the commonwealth. The Minister for Ports has asked Ms Divina D'Anna, member for Kimberley, to join me as the joint public face for future activities of the taskforce.