

RESOURCES SECTOR — PERFORMANCE

Statement by Minister for Mines and Petroleum

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Mines and Petroleum) [12.19 pm]: I rise today to inform the house of the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety's *Western Australian mineral and petroleum statistics digest 2021–22*, which highlights the record-breaking performance of Western Australia's resources sector during 2021–22. The records include \$231 billion of resource sales and all-time high employment of more than 157 700 workers.

Iron ore continued its stellar run, with sales of \$137 billion, the petroleum industry recovered to record sales of \$52 billion, and gold also hit record sales of \$17 billion. The growth of Western Australia's battery and critical minerals industries continued. Lithium moved to Western Australia's third-highest mineral by sales value, with a record \$6.8 billion, while nickel sales of \$4.9 billion were at the highest level in almost 15 years. Mineral sands sales were a record \$1.3 billion, rare earths sales were valued at \$779 million and cobalt sales were at an all-time high of \$522 million.

The future also looks bright with mineral exploration expenditure in the state reaching a new high of \$2.5 billion, with strong levels of spending targeting gold, nickel, copper, rare earths and lithium. The McGowan government continues to support the exploration sector, with applications for round 27 of the exploration incentive scheme's co-funded drilling program and series 5 of the energy analysis program open until 3 March. The competitive grants program offers refunds of up to 50 per cent for innovative exploration drilling and EAP projects, capped at specific amounts. Successful applicants from earlier rounds of the EIS are achieving great success drilling remote and underexplored areas along Western Australia's eastern border. Meanwhile, interest in new resources developments remained strong, with \$24 billion invested during 2021–22. There were also around \$57 billion of resources projects under construction or committed, with major developments in not only iron ore and liquefied natural gas, but also commodities for the future in lithium and rare earths. These results are just the latest supporting a strong period of growth for the resources sector under the McGowan government.