

STATE ECONOMY — DIVERSIFICATION

**324. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Premier:**

I refer to the Premier's budget speech in which he stated that he planned to expand and diversify the WA economy—despite Queensland having outflanked us to secure Fortescue Future Industries' green energy manufacturing centre—and also that he had secured the base for the federal ALP's promised \$100 million battery manufacturing precinct.

- (1) Given that many experts consider WA almost uniquely well-placed to capitalise on emerging energy developments, why is the government being outpaced and outmanoeuvred by other states?
- (2) Why do major projects see opportunities elsewhere but not in WA, where an abundance of rare-earth and critical minerals grants us a natural advantage for developing these downstream manufacturing industries of the future?

**Mr W.J. Johnston** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Acting Leader of the House, perhaps you could set an example in that role and not interject when someone is asking a question.

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

Templeman would never have done that!

- (1)–(2) It seems the Leader of the Liberal Party does not like Western Australia much. It is terrible! We have the Leader of the Liberal Party out there, running down his own state. It is a shocking thing. It shows how far the Liberal Party has fallen. I remember when Richard Court was here, promoting Western Australia, and Colin Barnett was parochially in favour. Troy Buswell, when he was Liberal leader, was always out there, advocating for Western Australia, and also when he was Treasurer. Do members remember Troy? He was one of the Leaders of the Liberal Party, in here advocating for Western Australia.

Several members interjected.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** As the member for Baldivis points out, he was a great supporter of the panelbeating industry in Western Australia! Former Liberal leader Troy Buswell and Leaders of the Liberal Party actually supported the state.

Now the state is literally light-years in front of every other state in Australia in economic and financial performance. It is so far in front that they are all whining; all over the country, they are whining. They are looking at us and they are pleading and falling all over each other to be the one who says the most envious things about Western Australia. All over the eastern states, that is what they are doing—the Treasurers, the Premiers. Remember New South Wales, the gold-standard state? They are out there, whining and moaning about how well Western Australia is doing.

The one person who seems to think the other states are doing better than us is the Leader of the Liberal Party here in WA. He is the only one. Scott Morrison, when he comes here, says, "It's great to see the state government doing so well. We've been a part of that." He is out there, advocating that the state government has done a wonderful job. Obviously, he wants to come into my office and catch up with me; he clearly does not want to do that with the state Leader of the Liberal Party! In fact, when he was asked who he was, he thought he was Mia Davies! I was standing there; I almost felt sorry for him!

We have put \$1.3 billion into diversification initiatives in the budget. The member does not listen to the questions, so I will tell him: that was my first question today, from our own side. I outlined some of the initiatives. There is \$1.3 billion for diversification, using our financial success to build the industries of tomorrow. The other day, Josh Frydenberg was over here for the Iluka project, which is virtually 100 per cent funded by the state government, which is interesting. It is a major project in proximity to Perth. We have lithium projects all over the state and we have battery processors undertaking their work around Western Australia. There are significant upgrades to many projects. We have the hydrogen precinct in the Pilbara, the Future Battery Industries CRC established in Western Australia, the LNG task force and numerous downstream processing initiatives.

Yesterday I was out there with Anthony Albanese, who has an interest in these things. He visited our new rail manufacturing workshop, which is an amazing project. It was built from scratch by the Minister for Transport —

Several members interjected.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** She is a very talented woman! It rose from the ground out there in the member for Midland's electorate, creating jobs and high-tech industries. Do members remember what the Liberal Party said about that? It said it is an old, tired industry. Now we have these high-tech jobs. They are out there, working on computers, and it is a very high-tech new industry. You could have eaten your dinner off the floor.

That is what we are doing. We have 3.4 per cent unemployment, the strongest growth in jobs over the course of the last two years, and 40 per cent of the national GDP produced by Western Australia, yet we have the Leader of the Liberal Party saying it is all bad. Do members not think that says more about him than it does about us?