

McGOWAN GOVERNMENT — FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

**527. Dr J. KRISHNAN to the Premier:**

Before I ask my question, I acknowledge Mrs Elsbury, who is the deputy principal, and the student leadership of the Ashburton Drive Primary School on behalf of the member for Southern River.

I refer to the McGowan Labor's commitment to delivering a strong economy for Western Australia. Can the Premier outline to the house the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics data regarding jobs and wages show about this government's efforts in driving the WA economy and delivering more job opportunities for workers?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

I thank the member for Riverton for the question.

The Western Australian economy continues to lead Australia. We recorded the strongest jobs growth in the month of July across all the states. The number of people employed grew by 6 400, and more than half of those jobs were full-time jobs. Our unemployment rate fell to 3.2 per cent—lower than nearly every other state and territory and less than half the rate we inherited from the Liberal and National Parties. There are more than 166 000 additional Western Australians in work now than when we came to office. Pleasingly, more than 120 000 of those 166 000 jobs are full-time jobs. So, 72.5 per cent of the jobs we created during our time in office are full-time positions of employment. We have the highest participation rate of all the states at 69.4 per cent. We have the strongest wage growth in the country. What I would say to people in other states of Australia is that they can come to Western Australia, they can get a good job with a good wage and a far more affordable lifestyle than any other state in Australia.

At the same time, we have managed the finances in a way that is the strongest in Australia. This means we have the fiscal capacity to respond to challenges, like the cost-of-living pressures facing families. We have a wages policy that delivers significant pay increases and a cost-of-living payment to all public sector employees. We have a decrease in this year's budget in household fees and charges of 3.8 per cent across the board because of our \$400 electricity credit. We are able to provide everyone across Western Australia with free rapid antigen tests. We have capped public transport fares at two zones, and we have capped regional air fares for people from the country flying to the city and return. We continue to manage the finances responsibly and sensibly. We do not want to make the mistakes of the last government, which was blowing debts and deficits, and which lost the AAA credit rating; that is when the Liberals and Nationals were in office. Obviously, we have restored the AAA credit rating during our term in office, and we have the strongest economy in Australia. We intend to keep leading the state in the responsible, sensible and economically prosperous way that we have to at this time.