

MCGOWAN GOVERNMENT — JOB CREATION

395. Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE to the Premier:

Can the Premier outline to the house how the McGowan Labor government's responsible financial management has meant more investment in job-creating projects and more support for our training sector?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. Since we came to office, 44 000 new jobs have been created in Western Australia. In April, 6 500 jobs were created—the second highest rate of growth in Australia—and 4 700 of those jobs are full-time. That is a significant improvement, since we inherited the worst unemployment rate in Australia under the Liberals and Nationals. At the heart of this government's budget is our \$4.1 billion construction program on Metronet, and our plan to invest in train construction here in Western Australia. Construction is set to get underway this year on three of those Metronet projects. We are spending \$4.2 billion on road infrastructure and maintenance, including 25 major projects in Perth and regional Western Australia. Through Keystart, we have succeeded in boosting the housing sector. There has been a significant increase in inquiries as a consequence. I know that the Liberal Party in Western Australia hates it, and I know the Liberal Party nationally loves it. We have provided a record amount of support for tourism. We have invested \$4.5 million in our international education strategy, and that shows that good financial management allows us to do good things. We are implementing the new employer incentive scheme, a \$182 million scheme that provides a base payment of \$8 500 to employers—including small businesses, which had been excluded before—for employing an apprentice or trainee. Small businesses are the beneficiaries of that, and they never have been before. That is real training for real jobs. We have extended the Building and Construction Industry Training Fund to the mining sector, which has never been done before, so that the mining sector now contributes in the same way as the building and construction sector to training Western Australians. No government before has had the courage to do that.

Mr R.S. Love: It is a good policy.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Thank you; I am glad you are congratulating me.

Mr R.S. Love: It was our policy in the first place.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Hold on, if it was your policy, you had eight and a half years and you did not do it, but I appreciate the member's support, and I mean that sincerely.

We inherited a training sector from the member for Scarborough, in which TAFE fees had increased by 500 per cent. We have frozen TAFE fees. We have rebuilt the sector on what we inherited from the Liberals and Nationals in office. We want to see more Western Australians trained to take advantage of the great job opportunities available here in Western Australia, and I think our record of 44 000 new jobs since we have been in office says that we are serious about ensuring that Western Australia gets back on track.