

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRY PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

814. Dr J. KRISHNAN to the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to supporting local, small and medium-sized businesses and its efforts in creating more local job opportunities through the Western Australian Jobs Act. Can the minister update the house on this government's landmark WA industry participation strategy and outline how it is driving the diversification and growth of the Western Australian economy?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I thank the member for the question. In particular, I want to acknowledge the values that he shares with the Labor McGowan government, which is that we do not have a more important core value than delivering high-quality, safe and sustainable jobs for the workers of Western Australia. That is why when the government came to power in 2017, we implemented the Western Australian Jobs Act to ensure that state government procurement and purchasing policies actually support local industry and local jobs. Members may recall that when we came to power in 2017, unemployment was around 6.5 per cent, and today we know that it is around 3.6 per cent. We have one of the best job markets in the world and we are really pleased with that, but there is more work to be done.

The Western Australian Jobs Act was designed to create as many local jobs and apprenticeships as possible amongst businesses bidding for WA government contracts, as well as ensuring that local small businesses participate as suppliers or subcontractors. That is why we launched the Western Australian industry participation strategy in 2018 as a requirement of the act and a keystone component of our commitment to WA jobs. The strategy focuses on ensuring that local small and medium-sized enterprises, which make up around 97 per cent of WA businesses, benefit from an even greater share of the \$32 billion worth of procurement that is undertaken by the state government each year.

As a state, we have a lot of reasons to be proud of the work that has been done under the Western Australian Jobs Act. Since 2018, it is estimated that the WA jobs act, the WA industry participation strategy and associated activities have supported the creation of more than 64 000 jobs and 4 500 apprenticeships and traineeships across Western Australia. This is a Labor government in action. In 2021 alone, during an extremely difficult period, more than 11 000 WA jobs were supported, including over 3 000 in our regions, with a 94.3 per cent local sourcing rate being achieved. This is in addition to the 982 apprenticeships, 290 of which were across regional WA for the same period. In 2021, we also launched three rounds of the local capability fund. These funds are available to small businesses to provide them with the skills to compete more effectively for state government contracts. That resulted in over \$2 million in funding being provided to 62 Western Australian companies, further enhancing the competitiveness of our local SMEs. Earlier this year, we also updated the WA Buy Local policy to provide increased prominence for local businesses that employ people with disability and focus on regional WA.

As we all know, our economic landscape, both domestically and internationally, has changed significantly since 2018. That is why, as a result of these changing trends and new developments, many of which will have an impact on procurement and local jobs generation, particularly around the resilience of our local supply chains, we are conducting a review of the WA jobs act because we want to ensure that the legislation remains an important part of job creation in Western Australia. We will continue to utilise the procurement as a driving force for economic diversification in our transition to a decarbonised low-emission economy. As the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade, I look forward to the outcome of that review and we look forward to more great results from the WA jobs act creating more Western Australian jobs from local Western Australian businesses.

The SPEAKER: The member for North West Central with the last question.