

JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT

**612. Ms A.E. KENT to the Premier:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to ensuring that Western Australia has a strong and stable economic position in light of growing concerns about a global recession.

- (1) Can the Premier update the house on this government's success in delivering a nation-leading economy?
- (2) Can the Premier advise the house how he will use the opportunity provided by the upcoming visit of the Japanese Prime Minister to further strengthen our trade and investment relationship?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

I thank the member for Kalgoorlie.

- (1) Obviously, Western Australia continues to be the economic powerhouse of Australia. Over the COVID pandemic, we supported the rest of the country during their difficulties by keeping our industries open and keeping COVID out, despite some of the criticisms that have now emerged. It is good to see that the figures today show that Western Australia's employment figures remain extremely strong. We have the strongest participation rate in Australia and we have a very low unemployment rate. We are amongst the strongest, if not the strongest, in Australia when it comes to these matters.
- (2) In coming days, the Japanese Prime Minister will visit Australia. He will only visit one place and that is Western Australia. I will join the Prime Minister and other people involved in business and the like in various meetings with the Japanese Prime Minister and at various events. It is terrific that Prime Minister Kishida is taking the opportunity to come to Western Australia. For the last 60 or so years, Japan has been a very important trade and investment partner for Western Australia. It is our second-largest trading partner. It is a very reliable and friendly trading partner and very important for the success of the Western Australian economy.

We will also take this opportunity to promote diversification initiatives for the Western Australian economy. Before the COVID pandemic, the former Minister for Tourism, who is now the Minister for Police, secured direct flights between Tokyo and Perth. We will advocate for a restart of those direct flights, which were unfortunately cancelled over the COVID period. We will also promote investment in economic diversification, particularly for renewable hydrogen and battery minerals, with the Japanese government. That will be an ongoing opportunity for Japan to invest in Western Australia and take offtake of renewable hydrogen and battery minerals.

As the member said, the world is in grave danger of entering a recession next year. We will continue to make sure that Western Australia remains as strong as possible to confront what might be ahead of us.

*Visitors — Harvey Primary School and Georgiana Molloy Anglican School*

**The SPEAKER:** I would like to welcome some guests to my gallery today. On behalf of the member for Murray–Wellington, I would like to acknowledge the nine students from Harvey Primary School. Welcome. I also acknowledge that we have guests of the member for Vasse from Georgiana Molloy Anglican School. Welcome.