

INVEST AND TRADE WA INDONESIA CONNECT ROADSHOW

615. Mr P.C. TINLEY to the Premier:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's sustained efforts to diversify the economy.

- (1) Can the Premier update the house on outcomes from the recent Invest and Trade WA Indonesia Connect Roadshow 2023?
- (2) Can the Premier outline how this government is fostering strong relationships with international neighbours to grow trade opportunities for Western Australia?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

Before I answer the question, on behalf of the members for Perth and Mirrabooka, I acknowledge First Class Constable Ella Cutler who has had a very bad accident in Croatia and is in a very difficult situation. She is a great police officer and frontline worker, and our thoughts go out to her and her family. I hope we can resolve those issues soon.

I also wish to acknowledge that today another one of our workers has lost their life on a worksite. Let us all continue to commit ourselves to making sure that people can get home safely at the end of the day.

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for the question. My government is unapologetic, and has as its high priority the economic diversification of our economy and our markets. It is about creating a resilient economy that can withstand shocks, whether they are geopolitical shocks, downturns in other trading partners or other interruptions to our economic prosperity. It is important to make sure that we work with our closest trading partners to continue to drive trade and economic growth.

In particular, our Diversify WA strategy is about decarbonising our economy, and we are not only looking to decarbonise our state and economy, but to help other nations to transition to renewable energy as well. Here in WA, we are rapidly growing our critical minerals and rare-earth sectors—exploration, mining, processing and, increasingly, manufacturing. In less than a decade, Western Australia has successfully established a multibillion-dollar battery and critical minerals processing industry largely under the guidance of the Minister for Mines and Petroleum, who is our minister responsible for battery energy strategy.

We have seen global-scale investments in battery-grade lithium, lithium hydroxide, nickel sulphate and rare earths processing projects. These projects are just the tip of the iceberg. As this burgeoning industry continues to grow, this government is working to ensure our key trading partners are primed to invest, collaborate and mutually benefit from the shift to net zero. One of these trading partners is our closest—Indonesia. It is the fourth most populous nation in the world with 278 million people and the largest Association of Southeast Asian Nations economy. It is an important opportunity for us. I had the absolute pleasure last week to lead the state's largest ever overseas investment and trade mission to Indonesia. I was accompanied by Ministers Johnson, Jarvis and Templeman, who sounds like he picked up a pretty nasty flu in the process. We focused on the key areas of critical minerals, agriculture, international education, creative industries and tourism.

A particularly important part of this trip was the Western Australian–Indonesia Energy Forum, which we held in Jakarta. Both regions are in an enviable position in relation to energy. Indonesia has the world's largest deposits of nickel, providing 90 per cent of the world's nickel sulphate. Western Australia has the largest deposits of lithium and provides over half the world's supply. We are both beautifully placed to be in partnership to assist the world as part of its clean energy transition.

At the forum, we saw WA industry liaising directly with Indonesian industry on exciting plans for the future—for example, the opportunity for WA to support Indonesia with its ambitions to be a global leader in electrical vehicle manufacture through midstream processing in WA or strengthening collaboration to secure future battery and critical minerals supply chains. We also have a commitment to continued engagement with the Future Battery Industries Cooperative Research Centre located at Curtin University.

These outcomes are built on my meeting with President Joko Widodo to sign a plan of action with KADIN, the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, earlier this year. This plan of action strengthens our economic ties, trade and supply chain opportunity. It also supports the existing memorandum of understanding we have with KADIN signed in February this year.

We are at a critical moment of our history. The race to renewables is now well and truly underway, and Australia and Indonesia have a once-in-a-generation chance to maximise the opportunities presented by decarbonisation. I look forward to working with Indonesia, as our closest neighbour and long-time trading partner, to achieve more great things, and look forward to discussing how we can seize further opportunities for our respective jurisdictions.

This is about WA jobs. This is about great companies in Western Australia taking the opportunity of being a trading state with our closest neighbour in the ASEAN region. It is a very exciting time, and I very much look forward to continuing to work with the 130 representatives we had in Indonesia as part of this trip and with all Western Australian industry to seize these great opportunities.