

STATE ECONOMY — MANAGEMENT

179. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Treasurer:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's efforts over many years to grow and strengthen the Western Australian economy.

- (1) Can the Treasurer outline to the house how recent economic data demonstrates that Western Australia continues to be the powerhouse of the nation's economy?
- (2) Can the Treasurer advise the house whether she is aware of any recent commentary on this government's approach to economic management, including in relation to cost-of-living initiatives?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Thornlie for that question. As we know, the Western Australian economy continues to defy expectations and national trends by growing strongly across all the indicators on jobs growth, state final demand and exports. Nearly 50 per cent of all national exports come from Western Australia. Again, despite the many headwinds, in particular the interest rate increases, we still see consumption in WA continuing to grow and surpass the figures from the other states. Of course, business investment is another figure that continues to be much stronger than in other states. WA's state final demand grew by 4.7 per cent in annual average terms last year and is one of the strongest of all the states. Members, as we know, through COVID and since COVID, it has been the hardworking Western Australians who have been supporting the national economy and the national finances. The hardworking Western Australians in our resources sector and all industries are contributing to national economic growth and supporting the state, the national economy and, of course, the national bottom line.

We are investing across the state to support new developments, whether it be Covalent's Mt Holland mine that opened just two weeks ago or the new Bellevue Gold goldmine that opened just last week. In the north, initiatives like the Lumsden Point development will facilitate the expansion and diversification of the resources sector in the north west. These projects are underway in Western Australia to support the economic effort in not only WA, but nationally.

Members, we know that the other states, in particular South Australia, do not like the fact that we secured a better GST deal. I say this to some other states but in particular some national newspapers that continue to have a go at the fact that Western Australia's GST deal means that we will now be getting 75 per cent of our per capita share—not 100 per cent, but 75 per cent! That means we continue to contribute \$2.4 billion to the other states. In *The Australian Financial Review* this morning, we saw an attack on our cost-of-living payments to hardworking Western Australians, and the idea that somehow we should not be supporting Western Australians who are out there not only doing it tough, but also continually contributing to the national economy. The whole idea is that somehow just because we have a 75 per cent floor, we should not be subsidising Western Australians' cost of living. I want to say to other states and some national media that Western Australia continues to do more than its fair share to help support the national economy. Our GST floor of 75 per cent still sees us contributing \$2.5 billion to the other states. For the other states to say that they should not be supporting Western Australians' cost of living shows us how bad the Federation is getting if the other states and the national media cannot recognise the heavy lifting that Western Australia is doing.

We will continue to support economic development in this state. Western Australians continue to work hard to drive our national economy. We will continue to make sure that WA pays its way in the Federation. We more than pay our way; we subsidise the other states. When we want to support Western Australians with their cost of living, it is because Western Australians deserve it and they contribute to the state economy and the national economy. We will continue to support Western Australians in whatever way we can.