

STATE ECONOMY

**958. Ms C.M. ROWE to the Treasurer:**

I refer to the McGowan government's commitment to keeping WA's economy safe and strong. Can the Treasurer update the house on the work undertaken by the McGowan government during this term to drive economic growth, create local jobs and support local businesses and how this compares with the economic disasters left by the previous Liberal–National government?

**Mr B.S. WYATT replied:**

I thank the member for Belmont for that very good question.

The Premier just made the point that Labor is the party for regional WA. It is the party for small business. I think it is beyond doubt now that WA Labor is the party for strong financial management, economic growth and job creation. The last 20 years, in particular the last four years, has absolutely confirmed that point. When I became Treasurer—I have made this point many times in this place, member for Belmont—I said that by the time I had finished, I wanted to ensure that the balance sheet was better able to respond to the circumstances that we had found ourselves in. I am pleased to say that that has certainly been delivered by the McGowan government and the McGowan cabinet.

Nine billion dollars is the change in debt that has been achieved over the last four budgets delivered by this government. As a result, there has been a saving of \$1 billion in interest over that time. When we think about it, that is an amazing figure, bearing in mind the global shutdown of our economy. Compared with March 2017, there are now another 63 000 Western Australians in work, on the back of a much larger participation rate now than there was in March 2017. That highlights the resilience of the economy compared with when I became Treasurer. After four years of domestic recession, we now have economic growth, and I suspect that tomorrow's accounts will continue to show that good story.

As a result, we have been able to do many things, and every minister in the government has been able to do so many things in their portfolio areas. The Minister for Culture and the Arts will shortly be opening the wonderful new WA Museum Boola Bardip this weekend. It is quite spectacular. The Minister for Transport, sitting next to him, has had charge of the multibillion dollar Metronet program, plus what seems to be a new road wherever we go around regional Western Australia. The Minister for Sport and Recreation is giving somebody a football wherever he goes. It is quite extraordinary. The Minister for Housing has seen nearly \$2 billion go into the property sector. The Minister for Corrective Services has not only built an entire prison within the prisons footprint, but also delivered drug and alcohol rehabilitation prisons that are being incredibly successful. That is why we do not have 110 per cent capacity in our prisons anymore.

Then there is the Minister for Mines and Petroleum; Energy. Someone called out a minute ago, "What happened to Warradarge?" The minister opened it just the other week. That is how successful that minister has been. The Minister for Child Protection—perhaps the toughest area in government—has done an incredible effort for Aboriginal kids in care. I want to acknowledge the Wungening Aboriginal Corporation and the efforts that we have gone to to reduce and redirect kids coming into care and making sure that families take them on. The Minister for Tourism, up until the point he shut down the cruise sector, was doing a tremendous job. Record numbers of international tourists were coming into Western Australia under that minister. Under the Minister for Water, sitting behind me, the investment that has been going into our water infrastructure has been causing disruptions in some places it has been so successful. The Attorney General has managed to appoint every lawyer in the state a judge! I think that is an outstanding outcome. And, of course, the Minister for Police has provided an extra 950 police officers, issued police with stab-proof vests and invested in infrastructure in a way the police have not seen before in the last 20 or 30 years.

I want to thank all these ministers who have done a tremendous job. The only reason we have been able to do that is the strong financial management of the Labor government. Strong financial management is not the end. Strong financial management is about creating jobs for Western Australians and ensuring that we deliver services for Western Australians that are sustainable for the future. I want to thank all my colleagues.

**The SPEAKER:** I thought you were retiring, Treasurer. Did you need to get more votes in caucus?