

JOBS — RAILCAR MANUFACTURING

1118. Ms C.M. ROWE to the Premier:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to creating local jobs through its historic decision of bringing local railcar manufacturing back to Western Australia. Can the Premier advise the house how the contract signed today for the local manufacturing of railcars will deliver not only long-term, quality jobs for Western Australians, but also a cost-effective outcome for the state?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

Thank you, member for Belmont. This is a great day for Western Australian jobs and a great day for local manufacturing in this state. As we promised before the state election, we have signed a contract today that will ensure that at least 50 per cent of our railcars will be manufactured right here in Western Australia. The contract that we have signed today is the biggest order of railcars in the history of Western Australia, and they are being built right here in WA.

Mrs A.K. Hayden interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Darling Range, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The contract will deliver over 200 quality, long-term jobs for Western Australians and hundreds more additional indirect jobs for our state. It is a 10-year manufacturing contract with one of the world's best railcar manufacturers—Alstom. The facility itself will start construction shortly in Midland. Today I was at the Midland railway workshops. It is a marvellous set of old buildings and guess who closed them? When in office, the Liberals and Nationals closed them.

The contract itself has come in \$346 million under budget. That is \$346 million under what was estimated at the time we announced this policy. Members might recall that there were some people out there who said it could not be done. On 5 February 2017, before the state election, I announced this policy and who said it could not be done? The then Minister for Transport, the member for Nedlands. He described it as a pipedream. He said —

“There is not critical mass, sufficient timeframes or the financial capacity for the state to build a rolling stock industry in Western Australia,” ...

The reality is not only are the railcars being built here, but also they are being built for a lower price than the ones that were purchased from Queensland. In fact, they are 25 per cent cheaper than the railcars bought from Queensland by the last Liberal–National government. We are going to see 246 new Metronet railcars built in Perth, with at least 50 per cent of the work done here in Western Australia. Members might recall that under the last government—the Liberal–National government—two per cent of the work was done here in WA. At least 50 per cent of the work will be done here in a purpose-built manufacturing facility and it will cost 25 per cent less than the railcars that were purchased by the last government.

Ms R. Saffioti: It's pretty good.

Mr M. McGOWAN: This is actually pretty good. The Minister for Transport is right. Congratulations, minister. Credit where credit is due. To be fair, the Liberal Party should be congratulating us.

As I said, there will be 246 Metronet railcars to replace the old A series—the red ones on the Armadale, Midland and Fremantle lines. They are nearing the end of their life and need to be replaced. The new railcars for the new lines are coming onstream over the next few years: Yanchep, Thornlie–Cockburn, Morley–Ellenbrook and the like. As part of this, we are replacing the *Australind*. We are building two new trains, and an additional six railcars. They are obviously a different type, because they are diesel. But they are being built right here in Western Australia as well. We know the good old *Australind*, one of the stalwarts of the Western Australian rail system, has been chugging away for a long time. We will get new trains that will be built right here in WA. I am sure the people of the south west and the Peel will love the new trains built right here in WA.

The railcars will be built in a 12 000-square-metre plant in Bellevue, near Midland. The construction of the facility will start early in the new year and be finished by late next year or early 2021 and work has already been contracted to Western Australian businesses. This is a turning point in manufacturing in Western Australia. Our businesses, our workers, our TAFE colleges can do anything. This means that we will see rail manufacturing come back to our state. We believe in local manufacturing. We believe in full-cycle docking of submarines coming here as well—where it should be! We believe in local jobs and under this government we are delivering.