

SOUTH WEST — EMPLOYMENT

Statement

HON COLIN TINCKNELL (South West) [6.39 pm]: I was not going to make a statement tonight, but I am encouraged to do so as a member for South West Region after Hon Dr Steve Thomas's very impressive statement. He highlighted a very major point. My stance on this is not necessarily aimed directly at the government, but as Hon Dr Steve Thomas always mentions, it is a scientific approach. I really hope that the government and the Greens are looking at this, because this is a whole-of-government problem. Western Australia is the job-loss capital of Australia. Half of all people in WA are worried about losing their jobs, so we know the state that we are in. Nannup, Collie, the mines in Ravensthorpe—we could go on; it is happening all over the state. I hope the government has a major position in the upcoming budget to provide jobs for people who have lost their jobs, and to retrain people into new industries. That should be a major part of the new budget. It is such an important thing. Industries are becoming out of date, whether they are climate or energy industries, and new industries are coming in. So far, there has not been a successful, coordinated program across the board sponsored by a government in Australia that has made that transition easy or better for people. We need to look at that and the government needs to look at that, but everyone in this house needs to debate that.

Jobs are the most essential thing to enable families and people to progress. We know that the number one commodity in this world is people. As I mentioned in my maiden speech, we often make policies and pass laws that benefit certain industries or certain ideologies or whatever, but sometimes we forget about the people and they are left behind. That is why the statement by Hon Dr Steve Thomas really resonated with me.

The south west is going through this stage, as are many other areas. I look at Ravensthorpe and ask, "What are the options?" We know that BHP pulled out of there a while ago and now another operator has pulled out of there. There are options—one option is up the road, 100-odd kilometres away—but right now those options are being foiled by environmental concerns. I think that is where the government could work with the environmental people and maybe try to advance that project so that the people who are going to be losing their jobs in Ravensthorpe have another option. There are many things that need to happen and I would like to see the government, in its budget, have a coordinated program for retraining people from certain industries, as Hon Dr Steve Thomas mentioned, from the logging industry to so many other industries. I said I was going to be brief; that is all I want to say. I just wanted to commend the comments of Hon Dr Steve Thomas.