

ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES — TRAINING

**1057. MR S.J. PRICE to the Minister for Energy:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's unprecedented commitment to training in Western Australia, which is demonstrated through its significant investment in TAFE and its decision to halve TAFE fees for high-priority courses. Can the minister update the house on how this government is ensuring that local workers in the energy sector have the skills and training needed to service our rapidly changing electricity networks?

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON** replied:

I am very pleased to answer a very sensible question from the member for Forrestfield. I note that the member for Forrestfield comes to the Parliament having had a history of working on the tools in industry. He had a useful life before he came into the Parliament—it is not like he was a banker or something like that before he got here. He played a useful role in society.

Several members interjected.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** The energy sector has experienced rapid transformation—not just here in Western Australia, but also worldwide. It is important that we have a training system that responds to the needs of this transformation of the industry. Part of that is that we are rolling out standalone power systems in Western Australia. We are the centre of the globe for standalone power systems. These products are being manufactured here in Western Australia and we expect up to 20 000 of them to be rolled out in the next 10 years. We have to make sure that we have a workforce ready for that. On 10 November this year, 12 workers from Western Power and Horizon Power started a 12-month program at North Metropolitan TAFE to become trade-qualified electrical fitters. They are cable joiners and linesmen who work for those two companies. They are coming from our government-owned trading enterprises to our government-owned training provider to work on this important upskilling. This is making sure that we have the skills that are required for this new industry around the globe, which is starting here in Western Australia. The program is a collaboration between TAFE, Horizon Power, Western Power and the Western Australian Utilities, Engineering, Electrical and Automotive Training Council.

The standalone power systems are being rolled out across regional Western Australia, starting in Esperance. I was very pleased recently to go to Esperance to formally launch the first of those standalone systems, and I must report back how strongly supportive the customers were of those facilities, which hold the opportunity to improve reliability and reduce costs. On 11 November, I was very pleased to go to North Metropolitan TAFE, along with the Minister for Education and Training, Hon Sue Ellery, to meet with 12 of the trainees who are already working for Horizon Power and Western Power. I was very pleased to talk to these guys, who are from regional Western Australia, including Albany, Mr Speaker. They are being upskilled and will go from being linesmen and cable joiners to qualified electrical fitters so that they can work on every element of the standalone power systems. I note that a group of Western Power workers have been doing a short course and although it does not give them an electrical fitter licence, it gives them greater skills for this new energy future. This is really good news and the best news of all is that this training program is a globally leading program that is being done right here in Western Australia by Western Australians.