

SKILLED MIGRATION

**177. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:**

I have a supplementary question. Given that this was one of his first actions as Premier and given the significant impacts it has had on other sectors as well, will the Premier take any responsibility for the significant skills shortage that is now adding to the housing crisis?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

I do take responsibility for having the strongest economy in Australia and one of the strongest economies in the world. I will take responsibility for that if the member insists. If she insists I take responsibility for that, I will take it. We now have a situation in which our average annual unemployment rate is down at around 3.4 per cent. It was 6.4 per cent when members opposite were in office. That is the reality. It is now at about 3.4 per cent and it was at 6.4 per cent when members opposite were in office. The total number of jobs created under this government, again from memory, is around 206 000. That is what has happened. Members opposite are attacking us now for creating 206 000 jobs, for halving the unemployment rate from when they were in office, for reducing debt contrary to any other state in Australia and for going through the pandemic with the least economic disruption and the strongest economy of anywhere in the world. That is what they are now attacking us for. That is the situation. Currently, we are building out there 30 000 homes because we took action at the height of the pandemic when members opposite called for it. A few weeks ago, there was some criticism about our housing initiatives at the height of the pandemic in April or May 2020, when the whole housing industry stopped. We joined the commonwealth government in a scheme to ensure that people signed up for building. I announced that scheme with Mathias Cormann. The commonwealth government was putting in \$25 000 and we were putting in \$20 000 a house. Do members know what the then Liberal opposition said? They said it should be \$50 000. That is what they said. A couple of weeks ago I heard them saying it was a disastrous policy that the government should not have done.

**Ms L. Mettam** interjected.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** We have got it. We have got you in Parliament saying it! You said there should be a \$50 000 benefit to new home buyers. That is what you said at the time. Just because you want to get a cheap media hit, you reverse your position. That is the nature of the Liberals and Nationals these days. Their whole philosophy is now just to oppose what Labor does. That is it. That is their philosophical underpinning on everything. It is no way to run a political party—just oppose what someone else does. What do you stand for? There is nothing. They do not have any policies. They do not write any. All they do is go out there, seek cheap political hits and just oppose what the government does.