

METRONET — TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

869. MR S.J. PRICE to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to improving job opportunities for young Western Australians by making TAFE more affordable and investing in new facilities such as the Metronet trade training centre. Can the minister outline to the house how this government's investment in training will create more opportunities for Western Australian workers to build and deliver Metronet?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

I thank the member for Forrestfield for that question. This morning, I was with the Premier, the Minister for Education and Training, the Minister for Police and the member for Swan Hills out at the North Metropolitan TAFE Midland campus, looking at one of the latest initiatives we have in both the Metronet and training space, which is an upgrade to the TAFE campus to become a specialist Metronet trade training centre. This is the delivery of yet another commitment to improve our infrastructure in Western Australia and those training opportunities. Under the plan, the TAFE workshops will be upgraded to allow people to learn specialist skills to be involved in the construction of Metronet, the railcars, and, of course, the operation of our rail system into the future. It is about giving young people the best chance to get long-term secure employment. Of course, that is coupled with the announcement yesterday of a 50 per cent reduction in our fees for 34 TAFE courses, including three courses specialising in the Metronet construction. Just by way of example, civil construction courses under the Leader of the Opposition's term went from just over \$600 to over \$1 000—that was under the Leader of the Opposition's watch. That is a massive increase. The cost of those courses in civil construction will drop to \$334 under a Labor government. Metronet courses that will benefit include civil construction, civil construction plan operations and other civil construction.

Many mothers and fathers raised with us at the time of the last election that they could not get their kids into training because of the efforts of the current Leader of the Opposition. As a mother of three young children, I want all future young people to have the opportunity to be involved in training and to get secure jobs. The Leader of the Opposition wrecked the aspirations of and opportunity for thousands of Western Australians when she was the Minister for Training and Workforce Development. She wrecked those aspirations. Does the Leader of the Opposition apologise? No; she gloats about it. She gloats about the fact that she made it unaffordable for young people to enter training. She does not apologise; she gloats about the fact that there were record increases of TAFE fees under her watch.

I have heard a bit from the Leader of the Opposition in her train wreck interviews over the past few weeks on radio. On top of gloating about the increase in TAFE fees, what has she said about Metronet? She said that the biggest problem in Western Australia is that we do not have the population that we need to sustain big public infrastructure like rail projects. She increased TAFE fees, and now she wants to cancel Metronet projects because she believes we do not have the population to justify them. She created job uncertainty, increased fees and made sure that many thousands of Western Australians missed out on opportunities for training. We will not do that. That is why we reduced TAFE fees to encourage young people to get into training and to create long-term, vital infrastructure projects like Metronet.