

STATE ECONOMY — DIVERSIFICATION

**346. MR S.J. PRICE to the Premier:**

I refer to this Labor government's commitment to diversifying Western Australia's economy. Can the Premier outline to the house how this government is leveraging growth opportunities for local manufacturing and how it will continue to diversify the state's economy?

**Mr R.H. COOK replied:**

The Labor government—the Cook Labor government—is proud about the work that we do on behalf of the people of Western Australia to diversify our economy and create the jobs of the future. We have been working tirelessly to rectify one of the great historical wrongs in our community. I remember as a young fella—I was born and bred in Western Australia—a previous government undertook to close down the Midland railway workshops, destroying thousands of jobs and essentially relegating that great knowledge and skill set that we had in those great workers to the dustbin of history. It was an appalling act by a Liberal government back in the 1990s. One of the things that we are very proud of is that we are correcting a historical wrong. Bringing back manufacturing and manufacturing jobs to Western Australia is core to Diversify WA and continuing to create great jobs for local communities. We made a promise to bring them back. Today I am very proud to say that we are making great progress in bringing great manufacturing jobs back to Western Australia.

Late last week I was at Aurecon's Bellevue factory with the Deputy Premier. We celebrated the first fully fitted out C-class passenger railcar coming off the conveyer belt in that particular facility. Once again, we are bringing jobs back; we are building stuff in WA—stuff that your mob over there destroyed back in the 1990s. We are going beyond that. We are using the \$15 million local manufacturing investment fund to assist local manufacturers to lift their capabilities and be competitive in getting great rail contracts, particularly in our mining and grain handling industries.

I am very proud to say that we were at Gemco Rail earlier today. It has entered into a contract with Rio Tinto to build 100 iron ore railcars. We are starting to build railcars in Western Australia once again. Our \$6.9 million grant to Gemco Rail will enable that company to lift its capability so that it will not only be able to continue to win contracts such as the very valuable contract through Rio Tinto, but also have the capability to undertake other componentry, such as bearings, which means it will be able to bid for lucrative maintenance contracts for tens of thousands of railcars throughout Western Australia. Western Australia has a very proud history around the rail industry. We have thousands of kilometres of rail. Whether we are carting iron ore in the north or grain across the wheatbelt in the south, we want to make sure that Western Australians build stuff here and that we manufacture railcars here in Western Australia, whether it is part of our world-leading Metronet project or our great heavy haulage industry. We know that we can build things in Western Australia. We are going to create jobs for the future. We are going to build stuff in WA and we are going to diversify our economy so we can continue to create great prosperity for our great state.