

YOUTH STRATEGY

**615. Ms J.J. SHAW to the Minister for Youth:**

Can the minister advise the house whether the youth strategy that this government inherited is serving our young people effectively; and, if not, what is this government doing to ensure we have a strategy that offers practical solutions to the issues facing our youth?

**Mr P.C. TINLEY replied:**

I thank the member for the question. I note her outstanding representation for her community, particularly in the area of youth. Since being elected to the seat of Swan Hills, she has won a significant vote of confidence for herself in resourcing the Ellenbrook youth space to the tune of \$1.8 million. That funding was sorely needed in the area of Ellenbrook, which is one of the highest youth suicide locations in the metropolitan area in Western Australia, and infrastructure is a significant part of that solution. Unfortunately, when I became Minister for Youth after the March state election, I inherited a five-page strategy that was printed in 2012 and introduced by Hon Robyn McSweeney and, at best, could only be described as a collection of motherhood statements or statements of the obvious. It is even entitled “Our Youth—Our Future” which is akin to saying that children are our future. I have to say that it is of very limited assistance to what we need to do.

Since coming to government, we have announced this week the establishment of the Ministerial Youth Advisory Council, which comprises 16 young people who will participate in assisting the government and providing advice on a range of issues around youth and youth matters. Members might not know that the government spends about \$136 million a year on youth services across all government sectors and often there is not a voice for young people in that discussion. The Ministerial Youth Advisory Council has a significant role to play in providing the government with advice that it might need on some of those policies. We received over 150 applications and I sent out letters this week to the successful candidates. For the benefit of members, I will outline the fact that the youth advisory council is made up of eight male and eight female members. Two members have a culturally and linguistically diverse background, one has a disability, two are from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community, three are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and four of the 16 are from non-metropolitan areas, and yes, they will be assisted to travel to ensure that they do not miss out on any of the particular meetings that they will undertake.

Youth in this state have an uncertain future in many ways, not just in areas like housing affordability but certainly in unemployment. We all note keenly the information that was provided in the public domain this morning from the National Australia Bank about 6 000 job losses nationally. What is really compelling about that story is not just the gross number of job losses, but also the fact that it will convert 2 000 of those 6 000 jobs into jobs that are not yet described in the digital industry. The change in the nature of work is fundamentally shifting right before our eyes. The future of a young person these days will include something like seven different careers and 14 different jobs. That is an amazing array of experiences that they need to garner, and a certain agility that I am glad I never had to possess. On that basis, the McGowan government is completely committed to developing a proper strategy for youth. It starts with a discussion paper that will be released early next week and will be widely consulted on. That is the start of the conversation across the state. I will be travelling through the south west in the next week or so, conducting some of that consultation with the ambition of producing a substantive outcomes-focused, trauma-informed collective impact strategy that Western Australian youth need.