

ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES — TRAINING

550. Ms J.J. SHAW to the Minister for Energy:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to create more training opportunities for Western Australians. Can the minister update the house on how the government is ensuring that Western Australians have the skills needed to deliver new energy technologies in projects in regional WA to help improve the power reliability in edge-of-grid regional areas?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

I thank the member very much for the question. We all know the depth of interest and capacity of the member for Swan Hills in her lifetime activity in the energy sector. I am, along with so many people in the energy sector, looking forward to the tabling of the report of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee that the member has so solidly led as chair. I know that the report will be the type of report that leads to great change and have a continuing influence on Western Australia's energy sector.

There is no question that a new energy future is coming along now. For the first time ever we are able to provide edge-of-grid electricity by applying new technologies that for the first time ever will give people in regional communities the same standard of supply that people get in more settled parts of the state. The real trick here is to make sure that we can deliver that and deliver good outcomes for working people in this state. I am very pleased to highlight two opportunities we have in this space. Western Power is rolling out in the wheatbelt the first of 57 standalone power systems for edge-of-grid electricity. It wants to upskill the workforce of Western Power so they are able to deal with this new form of energy.

I was also very pleased to go to North Metropolitan TAFE last week with Hon Sue Ellery, the Minister for Education and Training, and people from North Metropolitan TAFE and Western Power, to meet the first group of trainees who are doing a standalone power system training program at North Metropolitan TAFE. This is a world-leading training program. People literally will be coming from around the world to see the way that this is being delivered, so we can take people currently working as linesmen and in other occupations in Western Power and train them in these new skills so they will be able to maintain these standalone power systems. I was pleased to meet the guys from a range of depots from across the wheatbelt at the training program. I note that it has so energised the employees of Western Power that they want to be involved in the future of energy and there is a waiting list of Western Power employees to do that training program.

I also highlight the \$11.6 million commitment by Horizon Power and the government to remote energy projects in Ardyaloon, Beagle Bay, Djarindjin, Lombadina and Bidyadanga. Horizon Power is working in partnership with Indigenous communities to deliver new and centralised renewable energy projects in those five communities. It will provide lower cost energy and reduce the amount of subsidy required by Horizon Power, but at the same time will work in conjunction with those Indigenous communities to skill-up workers in remote locations so they have an ongoing capacity to participate in the installation and maintenance of these low-cost renewable energy projects. This is really good news. The state government is using the benefit of the state ownership of these enterprises to make sure that these technologies, which we are leading the world in, are being delivered by Western Australians for the benefit of Western Australians to reduce costs, improve reliability, deliver good training outcomes and job opportunities for Indigenous people. This is a real standout achievement for this government. I look forward to working with the state-owned enterprises in Western Australia—Western Power, Synergy and Horizon Power—to continue to deliver these leading edge technologies and training outcomes.