

STATE ECONOMY — JOB CREATION

697. Ms J.J. SHAW to the Treasurer:

I can understand how you would not be able to hear, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Pardon!

Ms J.J. SHAW: Before I begin, I acknowledge the fantastic students from Aveley North Primary School and welcome them to Parliament.

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to provide confidence to business, to drive economic growth and to continue to create jobs for Western Australians.

- (1) Can the Treasurer update the house on what recent economic data shows about how the Western Australian economy is performing and the challenges it faces?
- (2) Can the Treasurer advise the house whether he is aware if anyone has claimed responsibility for those economic challenges?

Mr B.S. WYATT replied:

I thank the member for that very good question.

- (1)–(2) Last night we had another debate on how much better things are now under this government than they were under the previous government when the confidence levels of WA businesses reached levels not seen since the global financial crisis. The data, as I said, although it is jumping around from quarter to quarter, month to month, is going the right way. The data from yesterday showed that WA is the only state in which construction is growing. Today, the Australian Bureau of Statistics released data on private new capital expenditure. This data is interesting and important because the member for Bateman made the point last night that apparently all the jobs that are being created in Western Australia are by the public sector and not the private sector. Of course, the member for Bateman got confused because he also included in there local government and commonwealth government jobs. Although I may have some influence, I do not have any influence on what the commonwealth or local governments are doing. Importantly, private new capital expenditure in the June quarter is up five per cent.

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Bateman, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr B.S. WYATT: That is the biggest increase of any state in Australia. That is important because it shows that the private sector is spending. That shows exactly what we know; that is, the private sector always does the heavy lifting when it comes to employment growth in Western Australia. The other point made by the member for Bateman last night is that if it is not the public sector—apparently we are employing everybody—it is all about mining. Importantly, when we unpick the new private capital expenditure, we find that mining is up by 16 per cent but manufacturing is up by 31 per cent, and other selected industries—that includes construction, retail, transport, finance, accommodation, cafes, restaurants—are up by 40 per cent, because businesses now feel confident to invest again under this government. That is exactly what is going on.

What I found interesting last night and have found interesting on the few other times that we have had debates on the impact of decisions made by the former government on the economy—this was not mentioned while they were in government, of course—the member for Bateman and other members opposite talk about negative equity. Again, it was not mentioned while they were in government. The point I continue to make is that 70 per cent of the decline in residential property prices occurred under the former government.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! If you want to ask something, ask a question.

Mr B.S. WYATT: What surprised me the most about last night is that I learnt that it was a deliberate policy of the former government to reduce property prices in Western Australia. The member for Bateman and the member for Nedlands were the two finance ministers who introduced two of the three land tax increases that smashed the property sector in Western Australia. By way of interjection, and I quote—this is what the member for Nedlands had to say about the largest increase in land tax, the third one done by the member for Nedlands—he said, “That is what made housing affordable” —

Point of Order

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Point of order. I am conscious that the Treasurer may be reading from the uncorrected *Hansard* if he is providing a direct quote.

Mr B.S. WYATT: You will find that I have no uncorrected *Hansard* before me, Mr Speaker. I am referring to my own notes.

The SPEAKER: It is not a point of order.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr B.S. WYATT: Members will find, according to my notes, that the member for Nedlands said, “That is what made housing affordable”. Who would have thought that the deliberate policy intent of the former Liberal–National government was to create the negative equity that the member for Bateman now complains about? That is exactly what the member for Nedlands did. Does the member know what? I will give him this. His policy worked. His deliberate policy to destroy the property sector worked. All I want to know is whether that was the member for Nedlands’ idea or the idea of his staff to make him look good? I do not know. Suffice to say, if I follow this through, I will find that his staff were right—destroy the property sector, lose government, become deputy leader. The trajectory is so obvious now for how this was going to play out. The data we see across all areas of the economy are much better than the data I inherited. I am fighting against the big ship of recession and job loss, deficits and debt that were left to me by the former government.

Several members interjected.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I said “ship”! I am also fighting against the deliberate policy decisions of the former government to destroy the property sector in Western Australia. We are determined to make decisions to ensure that the property sector gets up from the member for Nedlands’ and the former government’s policies that were very anti-property.

The SPEAKER: I do not think he said anything wrong. I think you are talking very quickly, Treasurer, and I think something might have slipped.