

MINING — SMALLER SCALE OPERATIONS — VIABILITY

**148. Hon SIMON O'BRIEN to the minister representing the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:**

- (1) What benefits does the state derive from smaller scale mining operations, including the so-called iron ore “juniors”?
- (2) What are the main factors affecting or likely to affect the viability of this part of the mining sector?
- (3) Does the government support this part of the mining sector; and, if so, what will the government do to assist its viability?

**Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:**

The Minister for Mines and Petroleum has provided me with the following answer —

- (1) Western Australia’s smaller scale miners play a vital role in providing jobs and opportunities for Western Australian workers, their families, and communities. Smaller scale miners often extract resources that larger companies will not mine.
- (2) The viability of the sector is influenced by global commodity prices and its ability to keep production costs low, while maintaining sustainable cash flows.
- (3) The government recognises the contribution that all sections of the mining industry provide. An important priority for this government is to encourage continual investment in the resources industry.