

DEFENCE SCIENCE CENTRE

432. Mr Y. MUBARAKAI to the Minister for Defence Issues:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to creating more defence industry jobs in Western Australia through the state's first "Western Australian Defence and Defence Industries Strategic Plan".

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the implementation of this job-creating strategic plan; in particular, the Defence Science Centre?
- (2) Can the minister outline how the centre will drive research and development in this state?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

- (1)-(2) I thank the member for Jandakot for his interest in driving up job numbers in Western Australia, particularly in the defence sector. I am pleased to inform the member that only this morning I was on St Georges Terrace meeting with my new good friend, Minister Melissa Price, the federal Minister for Defence Industry. I found her! No, that is not fair.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr P. PAPALIA: I congratulated her —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! Today we have to finish between 10 and five minutes to three, because we have an MPI and we need time to do it. Members, stop interjecting; let the minister get on with his answer.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It was wonderful to congratulate her and the federal government on collaborating with the state government in the interest of the defence industry in Western Australia and our small to medium-sized enterprises and research institutions.

The Defence Science Centre is now up and running. It is a collaboration. We are putting in \$500 000, the federal government is putting in \$250 000, and the universities are contributing. All of Western Australia's public universities are part of team WA when it comes to defence. The Defence Science Centre will be, in the words of the director of the Defence Science Centre, a matchmaker, putting SMEs together with universities to work on problem-solving for our Defence Force and those around the world, and looking for opportunities to export capability.

At that get-together I congratulated the former Minister for Defence Industry, and Minister for Defence, my good friend Christopher Pyne. What an initiative of his that apart from getting lemon for his own gin and tonic, he also drove the federal government towards embracing the need for a southern defence industry capability and empowering our defence industry to export its capability to the world. We fully embrace that.

The Defence Science Centre will do three things. It will do the matchmaking. It will have a grant scheme, which will come into play in the second half of the year, probably in August, to support research and development in the defence sector. It already has a collaboration with the Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute to fund \$10 000 grants, or subsidies, for 10 additional PhD internships in the defence sector in Western Australia, pushing science, pushing research and development, promoting the defence industry, and growing jobs in Western Australia. It is great news for the state.