

JOBS — SKILLED MIGRATION LIST

920. Hon CHARLES SMITH to the Minister for Education and Training:

I refer to the graduate skilled occupation list and the admission by the minister that it is in fact a pathway to permanent migration into Western Australia.

- (1) Will the minister now concede this scheme is less about actual labour needs in WA and more about providing an incentive for foreign students to study here?
- (2) Will the minister advise how this will not impact the employment prospects and wages of incumbent residents?
- (3) Is this scheme in fact a total betrayal of the government's election pledge to prioritise Western Australians, as it sponsors foreign nationals to do jobs that Western Australians could do at a time when unemployment is high and underemployment higher?
- (4) If no to (3), how is this scheme putting Western Australians first?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. Before I provide the answer, can I send my best wishes to him for his recent birthday celebrations.

- (1) The purpose of the scheme is to support the growth of the international education sector in Western Australia by providing a small number of the best and brightest international university graduates with a pathway to skilled migration under the existing state-nominated migration program.
- (2) The scheme will be implemented to ensure that only the best and brightest graduates with qualifications and experience relevant to the needs of the Western Australian labour market will be selected. The program is capped, which will minimise any impact on the employment or wages of residents.
- (3) No. It supports the McGowan government's plan to create a more vibrant and diversified economy with a broader range of industries and jobs.
- (4) The scheme will stimulate the growth of the international education sector and the diversification of the state's economy. This will create jobs for Western Australians in a wide range of industries including tourism, food, drink, accommodation, education and retail.