

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY CAREER INFORMATION CENTRE

Statement by Minister for Training and Workforce Development

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Minister for Training and Workforce Development) [2.01 pm]: Today I rise to inform the house about an innovative training facility that will skill up the next generation of workers in Western Australia's construction industry. The construction industry is critically important to the state's economy. It contributes 11.5 per cent of the gross state product and employs 153 000 workers, which is approximately 11.3 per cent of the state's workforce. The industry provides thousands of entry level employment opportunities for young people each year and currently employs 45 per cent of the state's apprentices.

The Building and Construction Industry Training Fund will soon tender for the construction of a cutting-edge construction career information centre, which will be built in Belmont and is wholly funded by revenue generated from the Building and Construction Industry Training Fund levy. The centre will be an interactive excursion venue for Western Australian school students where they can explore the variety of occupations and career development opportunities available in Western Australia's building and construction industry.

The new centre is unique, with no other industry-specific equivalent in Australia or anywhere else in the world. A variety of curriculum-linked interactive tools, hands-on activities, technologies and information sources will provide learning experiences for students and teachers that highlight the significance of the industry to the state's economy and connect them to the variety of occupations and pathways available to young men and women for developing long-term careers in the construction industry.

Driven and supported by industry stakeholders as a key strategy to enhance workforce development, the new centre is the next stage of the construction training fund's successful schools2skills program, which since 2004 has promoted career opportunities in the construction industry to secondary students and the wider community. Since 2013, this program has engaged more than 1 000 year 11 and 12 students in key industry-specific certificate II qualifications developed by industry and endorsed by the School Curriculum and Standards Authority, enabling students to gain valuable skills, knowledge and work experience in the construction industry while meeting new government requirements for the Western Australian Certificate of Education. It is anticipated that the centre will cater for more than 5 000 students and offer professional development opportunities for more than 400 teachers each year. Construction of the new centre and construction training fund offices is due to commence in the second half of this year. The centre will be open to schools as an excursion venue for students from year 6 to year 12 for the commencement of the 2018 school year. I look forward to updating the house as work progresses on this exciting project.