

**REVIEW OF TAFEWA OPERATIONS**

*Motion, as Amended*

Resumed from 16 February on the following motion, as amended, moved by Hon Ljiljana Ravlich —

That this house calls on the Minister for Training to provide information to the house on the review of TAFEWA operations, which will, among other things, be giving consideration to the level of independence required by TAFE colleges and the manner in which colleges can improve and streamline the way business is conducted and asks the minister to explain —

- (a) who is undertaking this review; and
- (b) what are the terms of reference for the review and the time line for completion.

**The PRESIDENT:** I give the call to Hon Jon Ford. Members, please remember that we are speaking to the amendment to the motion, unless somebody has not contributed to the main debate.

**HON JON FORD (Mining and Pastoral)** [2.18 pm]: Thank you, Mr President. In fact, the amendment makes little change to what I have been talking about. Effectively, the motion calls on the Minister for Training to provide information to the house on the review of TAFEWA operations and asks the minister to explain —

- (a) who is undertaking this review; and
- (b) what are the terms of reference for the review and the time line for completion.

I am talking about the minister's response. The worrying sign in the minister's contribution to the debate is that he is talking about training in isolation. The minister talked about strengthening the independence of TAFE colleges, and, pleasingly, about making them places of excellence and elevating their standing in the community. But the trouble is that if we do not have a vision for the future, based on the requirements of our community and the economic base that supports that, or, even if we do have a vision for the future, but we have a review of the structure of the organisation in isolation from that vision, we are going to fail. I have made the point that despite the fairly extensive list of people whom the minister has consulted or attempted to consult in his correspondence, he has left out a range of valuable people whom he should have talked to. Those people should have included the Minister for State Development and his federal counterparts; and he particularly should have talked to the industry bodies.

**Hon Peter Collier:** I consulted with the industry bodies—all of them.

**Hon JON FORD:** I will respond to the minister's interjection, which I am not particularly fond of doing because of another role I play, by saying that the minister's response did not refer to that; or, if it did, I missed it, so the minister must not have referred to his talks with industry at any great length.

Very recently—today, in fact—I had a discussion with the Chamber of Minerals and Energy, and we talked, amongst other things, about the very topical subject of skills shortage, and how the current available skill base can be matched to what will be required in the future. The Chamber of Minerals and Energy was very, very interested in the view of the state government and its vision for the future. The Chamber of Minerals and Energy is currently very focused on what will happen in 10 years, but it would like to see a lot more work done in preparing for 20, 30 and 40 years into the future. If we focus that far ahead, we will be able to develop our industry capacity to match where we think we will be in the future. Part of that capacity is having the competencies needed to match industry demands.

Those comments are related to the manufacturing industry, but, there are also, of course, social demands, and skills are required for that area. If we were talking to the Minister for Child Protection, the Minister for Health, or some sort of social support department, they would have a different view based on their experiences. We did not hear about any discussion the Minister for Training and Workforce Development had had about marrying those important considerations and expectations. For instance, there has been a fair bit of discussion inside this chamber and in the community around how to cope with the management of mental health. We have heard about the plan to bring in 6 000 overseas skilled migrants to meet the current deficit in skills, and either today or yesterday I read an article, contributed to by Minister Collier, about an even bigger shortfall in skills in the future. Those demands, in themselves, draw people away from other professions where they are required.

I suppose the great thing about TAFE colleges is the practical, hands-on experience that students receive before they go into the workforce. This applies to both people who work with people and people who work with tools. Now, of course, TAFE study deals with semi-professional skills not normally associated with academia or the higher tertiary levels of education, although in the engineering world that is a pretty grey area, and it is not much of a step to go into a professional academic position if someone has achieved sound TAFE qualifications.

What we really need to hear from the government and the minister—I do not think that the minister is alone in this—is what the overall vision is for Western Australia 50 years into the future, and what the plan is to get there. If that had been in place, we would have heard a completely different response from the minister to this motion. We would have heard about a term of reference that was focused on meeting future demands and future requirements, and matched the vision that the state government had developed. It does not have to be married to industry or any other particular sector. As I touched on earlier, the forecasting of health trends and then planning the requirements to deal with those trends from a training perspective is very important.

Pastoralists constantly ask me about how they can get well trained and skilled people to assist them in their businesses, rather than having to rely on domestic and international tourists, because there is a misunderstanding of the skill requirements. There is obviously a great opportunity for TAFE to fill those gaps, and if a plan was devised for the pastoral industry, we could direct that training in the future.

If members talk to anybody in the fishing industry, they will tell them about the dearth of experienced deckhands. Deckies do not just pull ropes, pots and nets. They need to understand navigation; they need to understand people overboard emergency procedures; and they need to understand about the safe operation of vessels. If they have that experience, there is the opportunity to move into higher levels of maritime work. TAFE has a great opportunity to marry in with the future of that industry. If the minister had stood and said, when talking about the vision for the maritime industry, that it is a harder one to predict, I would have accepted that, because the issues in the fishing industry are outside the real command of mere human beings; there are environmental factors, and international, domestic and commonwealth fishing policies, and the effect they will have on the industry. That industry needs to be focused on.

The obvious industries that everybody picks up on are mining for both oil and gas; those industries have a lot of synergies. The oil and gas industries say that they need a much higher level of skills training, and it would have been good to hear from the minister what he has in mind for that sector. Interestingly enough, when I got into the oil and gas industries, all the operators in the oil and gas industry were ex-schoolteachers, ex-policeman, ex-councillors or ex-chief executive officers of councils—members could name any public sector position—because that is where they all went. They went there because that was where the money was, and the only organisation that could offer them training was the company itself, because it was such a small sector at that time; nowadays, the companies seem to have stopped providing that training and they are hoping for governments to fill those gaps. One of the great things for people who get into mining for oil and gas is that those who get trained in the industry inevitably go overseas. People I worked in the industry with 10, 15 and 20 years ago now work in Brazil, throughout South-East Asia or in the North Sea region.

Part of the vision for that industry has to be looking at what international trends are, at where those people are going to end up and at what level training is pitched. Process operator training is definitely an opportunity in TAFE. It is fairly limited, because process operating is as important for the operation of a lamination factory on the Kwinana strip as it is for the operation of an oil and gas vessel or a power station. There are great synergies in that. Mining is certainly a great training base to give people experience in the technical trades that moves them onto more technical positions, but we did not hear that in the response of the minister.

The point I am making is that the management of TAFE cannot be treated in isolation. It is not an entity engaged in training for training's sake. If we are just looking at developing TAFE as an industry of excellence that can stand out in the world for its own sake, as I touched on in my previous comments in another sitting of the house, it would be great if we could offer training positions to overseas students and all the opportunities that that creates for that institution. That is why I like the idea of the independence, but not independence from the society that we are in.

The other side of it is: how do we deal with disadvantage? The one that immediately comes to mind is land councils, because I deal with them in my day-to-day business as a member for the Mining and Pastoral Region. I do not remember the minister talking about land councils, but he may have talked about the institutions that deal with Indigenous business endeavour and how we actually deliver that. I read back through the minister's response in *Hansard*, and nothing in his response talked about dealing with the ever-present issues of social disadvantage and how to train people and assist them to pull themselves up in society. How do we help them up? The minister has an opportunity over the months ahead to address that issue in this chamber, but what we have heard in response to other debates and what we will hear in response to future debates is exactly what we have heard in response to this debate—it is merely a defence of the current position without an underlying vision of where the state needs to be in 50, 70 or 100 years. A great friend of mine taught me that it does not have to be perfect; it just has to work. The great thing about visions is that you can change them as you move along and see opportunities develop.

In supporting the revised motion I urge the government to think about its plans for the future of Western Australia and to base all its decisions on where it wants the state to be. Training is a crucial part in planning the

future—from an industrial perspective, an economic base, a social support standpoint and a governance perspective. Part of any training has to have a strategic element. In the absence of a vision we did not hear a response about building capacity in any of those areas; it was merely desperation. Yesterday's newspapers noted a shortfall of tens of thousands of jobs. The government will be meeting with the commonwealth to look at ways that we can deal with the current shortfalls, but there is no big picture vision of where we want WA to be.

Everyone here knows that sooner or later the mineral wealth of this state will deplete. We have seen that the oil-rich states in the Middle East ignored this fact, and then at the last minute had a sudden rush to try to diversify into the tourist industry. As a result of the global financial crisis and local turmoil, those Arab states are a long way off being an attractive tourism destination and getting back the returns on the millions they have invested in trying to diversify from their oil reliance.

Training is integral to how we move forward, what we do and what this state becomes post mining. We have to develop a post-mining future for our state and our children. We have to deal with the issues that have arisen with the sudden extraordinary development in the resource sector in the state, and training is very much an important strategic part of that. I urge Minister Collier in his next round of reviews—I know it is an ongoing work—to look at the strategic value of any change and to match it up with a vision of where we want to be. If the government does not have a vision, there is an opportunity for the minister to take that vision forward. I urge the house to support the motion.

**HON ALISON XAMON (East Metropolitan)** [2.27 pm]: I rise on behalf of the Greens to say that we will be supporting the motion. I note that the amended motion does not really say much anyway, so I could not see why anyone would necessarily oppose it. Having said that, it was good to have heard from the minister. I have quite a few comments to make directly to his response. I also would like to say from the outset that the Greens supported the original underlying concerns as outlined in the original motion, prior to the amendment, particularly about the review of TAFE and the way that it was undertaken, which, as it turns out, was a broader review of the training sector. Clearly the Greens believe that government business needs to be undertaken in a transparent and accountable way. It has been good to at least receive some clarification about the way the review was undertaken and the minister's actions.

I accept that the minister has told the house that he consulted widely to seek advice on training and that this involved 500 letters. Early in the piece I received concerns from stakeholders who did not feel that they had been adequately consulted, which is disappointing. I suppose it goes to the heart of needing to make sure that everybody understands what is going on and that everybody feels confident that their views are likely to be given a fair hearing.

I note the importance of the training sector, particularly as our economy is once again going through a period of increased demand for skilled workers, but I also have some comments about the other value that the VET sector in particular holds.

As the minister noted in this place, WA's training sector is currently undergoing and will continue to undergo significant changes. TAFEs in particular are being subject to a range of considerable changes. They are being given more independence and autonomy. They are being rebranded and also being subject to increased competition for funding. As a result they are subject to increased exposure to market forces.

The last point of Hon Ljiljana Ravlich's original motion noted the concern that many people within the publicly funded vocational education and training sector have about the increasingly competitive environment that they feel they are being forced to accept. I note that the minister has set a target for the proportion of competitively allocated training delivery to increase from 27 per cent in 2009 to 50 per cent by 2012. I also note that, according to the minister, WA is currently sitting at a level of 67 per cent contestable funding.

The funding for state training providers should be a primary responsibility of the government. The concern that the Greens (WA) have is that privatisation should not be used as a way around the historic, chronic underfunding of TAFEs by successive governments. I note that, according to the Australian Education Union, Western Australian dollars available per publicly funded hour—this is in 2008 dollars—reduced by 28.6 per cent between 1997 and 2008; that is, from \$18.20 an hour to \$12.93 an hour.

Further and more broadly, the Greens do not support the premise that competitiveness in our VET sector will automatically lead to the best possible delivery of services and training to fulfil the needs of communities and individuals, or even industry. VET funding priorities do need to be balanced between student needs and employment demand for providing skills in satisfying and sustainable employment. The concern we have is that the drive to make state training providers supply more and more of their funding through commercial arrangements runs the risk of losing the core and the heart of a publicly funded VET system.

I note in the minister's response that he applauded the increasing autonomy that state training providers will be granted in their delivery of service. My concern is that granting them more autonomy and subjecting them to a more competitive environment will mean that they will naturally focus on those courses or services that will give them a competitive edge. Those are courses in the form that industries are saying they want, courses that are easier and more cost effective to deliver, and courses that give them more income. Considerable concern has been raised with me about the way particular courses are likely to be delivered in the form of modules, which might suit industry looking for particular short-term skill bases, but are not in themselves conducive to a long-term strategy for skilled workers. I would not want enhanced public-private partnerships, as described by the minister, to result in any course that is a little more difficult to deliver, or a little less immediately industry driven, to disappear, or to be available only to those people who are able to afford significant up-front fees. We need a sector that is funded to provide a broad range and depth of courses, and also affordable courses.

Historically, one of the great benefits of state training providers has been their accessibility. I would not want them, as the minister described, as centres of excellence and specialisation that can work hand-in-hand with industry, to lose their very special place as accessible and realistic options for people who may otherwise not have been privy to training opportunities. I am talking about people who have left high school early, mothers who are seeking to return to the workforce, the vulnerable unemployed or the underemployed. I also do not want the end result to be that state training providers are forced to carve competitive niches for themselves and students are forced to travel quite impractical distances to undertake specific courses. This is particularly important when we consider the young age of some people who are undertaking these courses. Training, of course, is about not only immediately feeding the mining and construction industries, although I understand why that is being given particular priority at the moment, but also the important social side to the role of TAFEs. The positive economic results of undertaking the social element of providing this type of training may take longer to flow through, but they are actually just as important. Training plays, as I said, an incredibly important role for vulnerable and disadvantaged members of our community; for mothers and for the long-term unemployed looking to return to the workforce; for people seeking to build personal skills or to change their life direction; and for people who are simply looking to increase the diversity of their life experience.

I suppose it comes down to the core of what we believe education and training should be about. Is it purely about satisfying industry, or do we recognise that there is perhaps a higher value than that? Training, obviously, needs to meet the needs of industry; we know that and have acknowledged that in this place. There is considerable debate also—I note the contribution of Hon Jon Ford—about whether the restructure is even meeting the needs of industry. I say that it is also about meeting the needs of individuals and communities, as it is also about personal development, and not just workforce development.

Adult community education in particular is an important tool that can promote individual and community development through learning. Funding should be provided for adult community education programs and facilities that foster a culture of lifelong learning. I note that generations coming through now are estimated to have six different career paths at any given point throughout the course of their life; clearly TAFEs have a very important role to play in that. We know that courses that enable people to undertake education and training for more than simply immediate industry purposes result in benefiting the state as a whole. However, because the route taken by these people is not as direct as that undertaken by apprentices and other VET students, they are sometimes not seen as being of much value; the Greens would heartily disagree with this.

On a related note, I take the opportunity to raise the issue of waitlists for the Certificate in General Education for Adults, on which I asked a series of questions last year. I was very unhappy to hear that people had to wait to be granted a place in this very basic entry course. The Certificate in General Education for Adults, which basically provides people with year 10 equivalency, is clearly an essential course, and is the gateway for a lot of the people I have described—vulnerable people—to enter the workforce and to begin their opportunities in life. However, many people who have applied to study for the certificate already have faced significant barriers to education in their life and would have had to make significant changes to their lives to even attend in an attempt to enrol to enable them to study. It may simply not be an option for them to meet a waiting list and then have to wait. I am concerned that that may be the time when these people are discouraged to the point that they decide not to pursue it. That is not something that I believe any member of this place would want. We all want people to have opportunities to meet their full potential.

In the rush to privatisation, therefore, the minister needs to ensure that these sorts of courses that have no immediate obvious market value, but I argue have immeasurable social and long-term economic value, are accessible to people and that people are able to undertake them readily and promptly. I therefore welcome the minister's drive to raise the profile of training in our community. I listened with interest as he talked about the rationale for undertaking the split between training and education, and also the links to workforce development.

I am concerned that in the eagerness to do this, a business model is being pushed to the neglect of other really important facets of training. One of the things I would be very interested to know—I note the Minister for Training and Workforce Development has already spoken, so I am happy to take this by interjection—is how many responses the minister received to his 500 letters that may have indicated a level of concern regarding the shift to an increasing competitiveness within the sector?

**Hon Peter Collier:** A shift to what, sorry?

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** Was there any concern in the replies to the 500 letters sent out about the shift to increasing competitiveness in the sector?

**Hon Peter Collier:** To increase the competitive nature of the funding?

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** Yes, whether there were concerns raised.

**Hon Peter Collier:** From memory that was not raised. We had dozens and dozens of replies and that specific issue from memory—this was two years ago—wasn't raised. We are sitting at about 67 per cent competitive funding. As the member is well aware, with over 750 private providers, it is a very, very competitive market. Those registered training organisations now have more access, which provides more opportunities across the board. Personally, I have not received any negative comments or concerns about the level of funding.

**Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich:** I bet the minister's department has! I have heard negative comments on a range of things.

**Hon Peter Collier:** You're more than welcome to identify those comments, but the question was to me and I certainly haven't heard negative comments.

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** I thank the minister for his interjection; I was aware that the minister would not otherwise get the opportunity to reply. My question comes back to who was scoped in the review. It is very interesting to hear the minister's response. Unfortunately, my concerns remain about the shift to competitiveness beyond simply the needs of industry and the broader issues around training. We know that, as our economy develops both locally and within the international context, it is clear that post-secondary education and training is increasingly becoming an essential part of the education process for individuals. Even in the relatively short time I have been on this planet—or alive, I should say; I am not from another planet—I note that the need for training specifically, whether tertiary or otherwise, has become increasingly important and valuable. These days people find it more and more difficult to gain employment without some sort of post-secondary qualification, which makes it all the more important that we make sure that this sector is available and that it captures possibilities for training beyond the immediate requests of industry at any given point. As I said, we have a social, not just an economic, imperative to supply and adequately fund post-secondary education for all community members.

The Greens are concerned that moving post-secondary education into private hands mean that specific courses, particularly courses that allow early access places—which is always an issue—quality and a holistic view of any particular industry are at risk in the pursuit of profits. The Greens do not accept that TAFE is merely another service or product; we believe it is much more than that. Training and further education fuels our industrial growth; it also develops our communities and improves the quality of living for individual Western Australians. Everybody is a stakeholder in TAFE: the government, industry, the community and individuals. The needs and aspirations of all stakeholders need to be balanced and cannot be left to the market to determine.

In closing, the Greens (WA) are concerned that to narrow the focus and the contributions that TAFEs can make is quite short-sighted and counterproductive at best. At worst it is damaging and discriminating. I certainly hope that when the minister looks at future reviews, he is very mindful of the very, very important social responsibility that this sector provides and that private training models may not be the best way to satisfy those needs.

**HON HELEN BULLOCK (Mining and Pastoral)** [2.45 pm]: I would like to make a few comments on this motion. I will start by commenting on the way the Minister for Training and Workforce Development answers questions. The minister has probably noticed that this motion is unlike any other strong-worded motion moved by Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich; it merely seeks information about the review of TAFEWA operations. This motion is similar to Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich's question on notice 1072. The member found out there was a review of TAFEWA operations only from the answer to her question on notice 569. Naturally, the next set of questions for Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich to ask on the nature of the review would be —

- (1) What the Minister is reviewing in regards to TAFE colleges?
- (2) What are the terms of reference for the review?
- (3) What the names and qualifications of each person performing the review?

- (4) When the review will be completed?
- (5) Will the review be tabled in Parliament?

Those are the exact questions asked by Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich in question on notice 1072. I believe these are all reasonable questions. They are not hard questions or trick questions, so there is no reason for the minister not to answer these easy questions.

**Hon Peter Collier:** I spent three-quarters of an hour answering that question on notice.

**Hon HELEN BULLOCK:** The minister did not answer the question in time. The minister treated Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich's question on notice very lightly and irresponsibly. Even when Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich put that to the minister last week, his response was that —

This should have been a question without notice or something. This is nonsense!

It was a question on notice.

**Hon Peter Collier:** I gave Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich the same answer as I gave in my answer to her question on notice.

**Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich:** And then he told me to put it on notice, but the whole thing came out of a question on notice!

**Hon Peter Collier:** Rubbish! You put it in before you asked the question.

**Hon HELEN BULLOCK:** However, the minister refused to give an adequate and direct answer. If the minister paid a bit of attention to his day-to-day work and answered these questions adequately, we would not have to spend the time debating this motion in its current form. To provide some comfort to the minister, he is not the only one to not put some effort into providing reasonable answers to questions on notice and questions without notice. Comments made in this house on the motion relating to the operation of the tourism industry provide further evidence of the lack of interest shown by this government's ministers in providing adequate answers to questions from the opposition—for example, question on notice 2577, which I will not repeat here. I will move on.

My second point concerns the time line of the events. The first thing the minister did after taking over the training portfolio was to undertake a review of TAFEWA operations, which we are debating now. A year later, he launched "Training WA: Planning for the future 2009–2018", which he referred to as a blueprint —

**Hon Peter Collier:** Five months later.

**Hon HELEN BULLOCK:** Five months later; however, that is after —

Several members interjected.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! I have heard from the minister and Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich in this debate, and I am very keen to hear from Hon Helen Bullock.

**Hon HELEN BULLOCK:** "Training WA: Planning for the future 2009–2018" is apparently a blueprint. The minister can correct me if I am wrong, but I remember that not long ago, in 2008, the then minister in the previous government, Hon Mark McGowan, MLA, also launched a blueprint that was very similar to this one.

**Hon Peter Collier:** No, he didn't launch it, in fact. You're wrong.

**Hon HELEN BULLOCK:** He did not launch it? There was a document back in 2008, so this plan was not developed —

**Hon Peter Collier:** The State Training Board provided a framework —

**Hon HELEN BULLOCK:** I thank the minister for correcting me. The State Training Board developed the document, not the minister.

**Hon Peter Collier:** Rubbish. You have no idea what "Training WA" was all about. Have you actually read the document? Do you endorse everything that's in the document, as Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich does?

**Hon HELEN BULLOCK:** I have the executive summary with me.

**Hon Peter Collier:** The executive summary is about two pages long. You haven't read the document? It's not that big. You're standing here, talking to this motion, and you haven't read "Training WA". You've got to be joking.

Several members interjected.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! Allow Hon Helen Bullock to make her point. It would be best if she made her points through me; I will not interject!

**Hon HELEN BULLOCK:** Thank you, Mr President. I was speaking through you!

Let us move on. In December last year, the minister finally launched a training framework and strategy—six months later than scheduled. Is that right?

**Hon Peter Collier:** You want an interjection now, do you? What on earth has this got to do with the motion? It's got nothing to do with the motion.

**Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich:** It's got everything to do with the motion, and you know it!

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! Two things: it is not yet question time, and if Hon Helen Bullock does not want someone to interject, she cannot ask a question and not expect an interjection. There was another point I was going to raise, but I have forgotten what it was!

**Hon HELEN BULLOCK:** I will come to my point. The point is that I have trouble with the time line of these events, as I said at the beginning when I started to make this second point. The minister needs to develop some kind of plan, blueprint, strategy or framework first, before he can do the review. After all, the blueprint is a kind of guideline for the process of review. In the minister's response he informed the house that he consulted hundreds of stakeholders during the review of TAFE operations. However, when asked, he informed the house that no report was produced; so where are the recommendations that came out of that review process?

**Hon Peter Collier:** Did you hear what I said last week?

**Hon HELEN BULLOCK:** Mr President, I take your suggestion to not accept an interjection.

It would be much appreciated if, at some stage, the minister could let the house know what recommendations came out of that review process and what has been implemented as a result. Having said that, I fully support the review of TAFE operations. We are moving into a new era and the review was needed to ensure that TAFE's operations met the demands of the market. We probably all still have fresh memories of the skilled labour shortage during the last boom. Because of that shortage, we had to import skilled labour from overseas. Since the last economic boom, both the federal government and state government have invested enormous amounts in training to try to fix the skilled labour shortage. The minister is quite confident that the recent changes made to TAFEWA operations, along with the "Training WA" blueprint will somehow, to some degree, address the skilled labour shortage during the next economic boom.

I actually wish him every success, but what worries me is the growing trend in the labour market. We are seeing a lot of manufacturing jobs, fabrication jobs and even engineering design jobs being exported overseas, even though we have the capacity and the skills to carry out those works. I have on a number of occasions in this house called on the government to re-establish our own manufacturing industry, but I suppose my hope is diminishing by the day. In 2009, the Premier signed an agreement with Oakajee Port and Rail that will see the steel fabrication and engineering for that project being done overseas. Chevron, following the Premier's lead, recently sent overseas nearly all of the engineering and fabrication work for the Gorgon project. I would not be surprised if somebody told me that some of the steel fabrication workshops are empty because they cannot get contracts from those two major projects.

I ask myself: why is this happening? It is for the simple reason that this government does not have the policies to protect local manufacturing workshops. It is very sad to see that our natural gas and iron ore reserves have created jobs and opportunities for young people overseas, but not for young people in Western Australia. How will the Premier respond when his grandchildren, at some point, ask him who built the Oakajee port and the Gorgon gas pipeline. He will have to tell the truth, and the truth is that the engineering, design and fabrication for the projects were done overseas, and that parts for the projects were manufactured overseas, imported back into Western Australia, and assembled using overseas labour.

I hope the minister is aware of the possibility that, despite all the effort he put into increasing the number of training places, young people in Western Australia are finding it increasingly difficult to get training and employment in this area because the government does not have a policy to protect local businesses and local jobs.

**HON LJILJANNA RAVLICH (East Metropolitan)** [3.00 pm] — in reply: I rise to support the motion standing in my name, as it has been amended. For the life of me, I cannot understand what the secrecy was all about, and why the minister did not bring to this place a summary of the key findings or why he did not broaden the terms of reference so that it was patently clear exactly what he was looking at and the purpose of the inquiry. Why has the minister been so secretive about it in this place and in answering questions on notice? None of that adds up to me. I can tell members that if this inquiry has led us to the position in which we find ourselves, with

the training agenda and the training achievements in this state, this was probably the worst inquiry ever conducted by a minister and paid for by the Western Australian taxpayer. If the minister takes the time to read my speech, which I am sure he will on a very quiet Saturday night—he might even give up a good Saturday night to sit in bed and read my speech—when he considers the outcomes of the inquiry, he will see that they are shocking. The commencement numbers for apprenticeships and traineeships are shocking. Members should be concerned about how many people are in training and undertaking apprenticeships and traineeships. Those figures should be concerning to every member in this place. I know they are concerning to all the mums and dads out there and to the thousands of young people who cannot get entry into their course of choice and to the thousands of young people who are being turned away by Western Australian colleges. I cited the example of one training provider who was funded for only 150 places but who could easily have enrolled 200 students to fill those places if he had been given funding for an extra 50 places; but he did not receive that funding.

**Hon Peter Collier:** They might have gone to another provider.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** That example is replicated all over the state. If this report has resulted in these outcomes—that is, what we know already from the figures on apprenticeships and traineeships—what has not been put on the record is that the Quick Stats data, which I want to put on the public record, indicates that the Fast Track Training Australia program had a 51 per cent reduction in commencements in July 2010 compared with the previous year. When we look at some of these other key indicators, once again they are very concerning trends.

The review of the state's TAFE sector did no more than result in the rebadging of technical and further education colleges. I suspect that this review of the TAFE sector also led the minister to the view that not only should he rebadge the TAFE colleges, but also he should finally distance himself right out of the Department of Education building, split Education from Training and build an empire on training. That meant he had to find a new place, and it is on the public record that that new place will cost the Western Australian taxpayers no less than \$6.6 million at this stage and an increase in ongoing annual rent of something like \$3.3 million. That is a \$10 million-plus bounty for this minister, who is more interested in empire building than in ensuring that Western Australians have the opportunity to get the training they require to take up the opportunities that will be presented by the boom.

The biggest failure, which goes back to this review, was evident when the minister walked in here the other day and put on the public record that 67 000 or thereabouts skilled migrants will be coming into Western Australia —

**Hon Peter Collier:** Workers.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I am assuming they are going to be bringing their families in some cases.

**Hon Peter Collier:** That is just additional workers.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** If we had trained enough of our own people, we would not be looking for 67 000 additional workers!

**Hon Peter Collier:** It is not migrants; it is workers.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** We would have had the workers with the appropriate skills here if the minister had put the money into training Western Australians. There is nothing surer than that. If the minister wants an indicator of where he has failed, it is in not providing the funding to the institutions, public and private, to train as many Western Australians as possible in preparation for the impending boom. The minister failed to do that. The minister came into this place and said that it does not matter about that because he had the solution in his back pocket: "It is called the 457 visa and that is the way I am going to do it; I am going to save money for the government by denying Western Australians opportunity because I have those 457 visas." That is what the minister has done. The minister is an abject failure.

**Hon Peter Collier:** Those comments will come back to bite you.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I do not care what comes to bite me; the minister can do whatever he likes. Quite frankly, the minister has not provided trainee places. Let us take Kwinana, which is a case in point.

**Hon Peter Collier:** This has nothing to do with the motion!

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! The point I was going to make before, and I have just been reminded of it, is that if any member considers that somebody's comments are not relevant to the motion before the house, the way to do it is not by interjection but to take a point of order.

**Hon Peter Collier:** Point taken.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I want to take up the minister's point that this is going to come back and bite me. I want this minister to understand about the unemployed people in Kwinana who had jobs on that Kwinana strip, and the mums and dads who cannot get work down there because the unemployment rate is, I think, three times higher than the national average—I understand the unemployment rate is close to 15 per cent there. I wonder whether this minister feels that he has done a great job given that we have growing unemployment in this state, and at the same time we have skill shortages and need to bring in skilled workers. I also want to make the point that this minister made a great deal about saying time and again in this place, "I am not just the minister for training; I am also the minister for workforce development". Clearly, by any indicator, the only thing that we can conclude is that the Western Australian workforce has not been developed to its potential, and now we find ourselves in this situation. I do not think it is good enough. This review has led the minister to make a series of decisions and put in place a policy framework that has led to these outcomes. Anyone who has followed this debate will know that the outcomes are totally unsatisfactory, and I think that the minister should hang his head in shame.

Question put and passed.