

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE — STATE ELECTORATES

478. Ms J.M. FREEMAN to the Minister for Training and Workforce Development:

I refer to a recent analysis of unemployment for each state electorate—which we all received from the library—that once again shows that the Mirrabooka electorate has the highest unemployment rate of any electorate. This is an issue that I have been raising in this house. There had been an increase of 32 per cent in the unemployment rate in the electorate between December 2014 and December 2015, so it has an unemployment rate of 17.2 per cent. It is an issue I have raised with the minister numerous times.

- (1) What specific strategies has the minister put in place to combat this problem in the Mirrabooka electorate, which is only getting worse in the electorate I represent?
- (2) Will she expand the courses offered at Balga TAFE so that residents in the Mirrabooka electorate can have better access to the training they need for the employment they need?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

(1)–(2) As members in this house will be well aware, I have been very committed to TAFE reform.

Mr F.M. Logan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cockburn, I call you to order for the second time.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Out of that TAFE reform project, I have collapsed 11 structures into five structures, freeing up \$23 million a year into the sector, and that has allowed me to hold fee increases to a maximum of four per cent. Out of that TAFE reform, we will see in the north metropolitan region in particular the ability for those TAFE campuses to offer a wider range of courses to a broader range of students. That is the purpose of the reform.

Balga TAFE and other TAFEs do a terrific job. We fund those TAFE campuses to deliver priority skills programs in over 600 courses that receive the maximum amount of state government funding to ensure that the students going through places like the Balga campus are being trained in qualifications that will lead to employment or further education. Eighty-nine per cent of our students do that.

We also have our Aboriginal workforce development centres that are specifically for Aboriginal people who have been long-term unemployed or have never held a job. We have specific programs that run in the north metropolitan area. The member brought one of those up in this place previously. The member for Mirrabooka said that we had cancelled a program that was dealing with disengaged youth and trying to get them into training, which was incorrect. We have specifically targeted programs for specific groups that we know are over-represented in the unemployment figures.

Altogether, with the TAFE reform, our Aboriginal workforce development centres, our workforce development centres and the private training providers and other groups that we employ to specifically target those at-risk groups, we are doing the best that we can.