

FUTURE BATTERY INDUSTRY

278. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to driving the development of Western Australia's future battery industry.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how this government has been able to secure commonwealth support for the Future Battery Industries Cooperative Research Centre?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this will build on this government's commitment to supporting this emerging industry and creating more job opportunities for Western Australians?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

- (1)–(2) I am very pleased to announce that, under the Premier's leadership, Western Australia has secured the Future Battery Industries Cooperative Research Centre. As we know, Western Australia is the only place the CRC could ever have gone because we are the only state that can deliver all the resources that are needed to make a battery. The Western Australian government, under the Premier's leadership, led the way in this project and put together a \$6 million package to support the bid for the CRC. We were very pleased to receive such overwhelming support from the industry, which was able to secure \$22 million of funding from the private sector and more funding is being promised every day. We were able to get all the universities together and put together a team that bid for this project. I am very pleased that, unlike METS Ignited that went to Queensland, we have been able to get the commonwealth government to support Western Australia's resources sector for a change. We know that the commonwealth does not like to support Western Australia's resources sector; it likes to talk about Queensland all the time. We are very pleased that the CRC has come to Western Australia. It is now an important driver of innovation in Western Australia. Innovation is something that this government strongly supports. We can see that in the work of the Minister for Science, the work of the Premier in the LNG Jobs Taskforce, and in the work of Hon Alannah MacTiernan in the hydrogen taskforce. This government is interested in innovation and new ideas. That is why we are contrasted with the opposition, which never came up with new ideas and did not support emerging industries. The opposition, when in government, was a disaster for new ideas in this state. They never talked about it. There were fewer than 400 jobs in the lithium industry when we came to government, and there are now 3 000 jobs, on the way to further growth. The Tianqi Lithium plant was completed last year. It is going to be activated under this government. The Albemarle Kemerton Project commits to an multi-generational project in Kemerton delivered by this government. It is the largest expansion of lithium mining delivered by this government. We now have this CRC to support innovation and new ideas. It shows that with a government with good leadership, like we get from the current Premier, which is interested in innovation and not running down research and development companies in Western Australia—like opposition members have done every day that they have been in this Parliament—we can get things done. I am pleased we have been able to get this done.