

**MINERALS RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

*Statement by Minister for Mines and Petroleum*

**MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Mines and Petroleum)** [12.06 pm]: It is with great pleasure that I stand here today to inform the house of the McGowan government's ongoing support for a critical research agency. In the 2022–23 state budget, the McGowan government committed a further \$6 million over the next four years to the Minerals Research Institute of Western Australia, or MRIWA. This brings the total to \$12 million, following an extra \$6 million in funding in September last year. Members of the house will be familiar with MRIWA's important research work that is addressing net zero emission mining and green steel challenges. Securing funding for MRIWA for the next four years means real momentum can be created to find technological solutions for the WA mining industry. MRIWA will progress research in key focus areas, including critical minerals to enable security of supply for international markets and increased downstream processing; precision and low-impact mining to reduce waste and the footprint of the sector; alternative uses of tailings and waste from mineral processing, leveraging the principles of a circular economy; and the uptake of clean energy technologies to support growth in minerals. Unearthing technological solutions will enable the mining industry to continue to deliver economic, environmental and social benefits to Western Australia. An ACIL Allen report found that each \$1 million invested by government for minerals research resulted in at least \$3.12 million in direct benefits to the state.

A recent breakthrough by MRIWA and Curtin University researchers was in the development of a new technology for detecting seismic energy as it passes through rocks and soil beneath the surface. Originally developed to identify locations to drill for gold, the seismic detection system can be used for any commodity using salt-tolerant fibre-optic cable. This new technology will create new exploration opportunities in Western Australia where seismic surveying was previously too expensive or challenging for companies. Essentially, the technology makes it cheaper and easier for exploration companies to detect mineralised structures beneath the surface, which could help find the next big discovery in WA, leading to new mines and new jobs. Western Australia is a world leader in innovation and technology and is often the example other countries look to for expertise in all facets of the mining sector. Our mining sector has continued its strong performance and, through MRIWA, there is an opportunity stay at the leading edge of solutions that reduce processing costs and improve environmental outcomes.