

EXPLORATION INCENTIVE SCHEME

Statement by Minister for Mines and Petroleum

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Mines and Petroleum) [2.04 pm]: It is with great pleasure that I stand here to inform the house that round 24 of the exploration incentive scheme co-funded drilling program has been awarded. A total \$6.35 million in McGowan government funding will support 51 exploration projects at greenfields terrain across the state. The EIS continues to be extremely successful, having previously supported a number of major discoveries.

Capricorn Metals' Karlawinda gold project in the Pilbara is a recent example, having celebrated its first gold pour on 30 June. Gold production from Karlawinda is estimated to be up to 120 000 ounces per annum over 10 years. It is an example of the McGowan government's support for the mining industry, which is creating a pipeline of jobs for Western Australians. Gold exploration in under-explored areas of the state continues to attract significant EIS support.

I am happy to report there is also a healthy appetite for battery minerals exploration. More than 35 per cent of the drilling projects will be looking for battery minerals like manganese, lithium, tantalum, rare earth elements and cobalt. Of the battery minerals-related co-funded drilling taking place, 73 per cent of the projects are dedicated to nickel. DevEx Resources has used its grant at the Sovereign nickel-copper-PGE play in the Julimar region. Of course, Chalice Mining has recently lit up the Julimar area, 70 kilometres north of Perth, and we are all amazed at the company's initial resource estimate.

The McGowan government's beefed-up \$12.5 million EIS also includes funding for the energy analysis program. Six EAP studies will receive a total of \$245 000, with the grants offered for core analysis and seismic reprocessing studies across the Carnarvon, Perth and Canning basins. The next round of the EIS opens on 7 February 2022. I wish all successful recipients the best of luck in their efforts. Never has the economic importance of WA's mining and resources sector been so clearly demonstrated than during the COVID-19 pandemic. The McGowan government resisted calls to shut down the sector at the height of the pandemic. This protected tens of thousands of WA jobs and helped cement our place as the engine room of the Australian economy. The McGowan government's support for the resources sector is promoting innovation and exploration. Our boosted EIS is just one example of our commitment to economic diversification and creating jobs for Western Australians.