

TAFE TRAINING COURSES — INVESTMENT

785. Ms H.M. BEAZLEY to the Premier:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to creating jobs and providing affordable TAFE courses.

- (1) Can the Premier advise the house how this government is utilising the state's strong economic position and thriving jobs market to provide training opportunities for Western Australians?
- (2) Can the Premier advise the house how the state government is working with the commonwealth to address the critical skills shortages facing WA?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member and also the Minister for Education and Training for joining me yesterday at Bentley TAFE, where we announced some of these new initiatives that we are putting in place in conjunction with the commonwealth government. As members know, we have made training significantly more affordable than it was, and Western Australia is now acknowledged as the most affordable jurisdiction for training of any of the states of Australia. When we came to office, we reversed what the last government did. Members might recall that the then training minister, Liza Harvey, the former member for Scarborough, put up the cost of some courses by 500 per cent for Western Australians. We reversed those massive hikes; we froze TAFE fees initially and then reduced some—in fact, many—by at least 72 per cent.

What we have signed with the Albanese Labor government is a new initiative that is a \$112 million joint package that includes infrastructure upgrades at Midland TAFE for a renewable jobs and training hub, a \$2 million state-of-the-art commercial kitchen at Bentley Pines Training Restaurant, and \$3 million for a trade training centre at Ellenbrook Secondary College. It will deliver 18 800 free TAFE and training places. The courses we are targeting include the care, technology and digital, agriculture, construction, hospitality and tourism sectors. There will be free courses; for instance, there will be 8 500 places in the care sector. This will cover course fees for 58 full TAFE qualifications and course fees and resource fees for 56 skill sets. It is particularly for a range of priority groups, including Indigenous Western Australians, young people, people who have been out of work for a considerable period, people with disabilities and the like. This is a wonderful new initiative to get Western Australians trained, particularly some of those people who have had difficulties accessing the labour market.