

MAIN ROADS — MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS

759. Ms E.J. KELSBIE to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the efforts of the McGowan Labor government to create jobs and drive economic opportunities across regional Western Australia, as well as its commitment to bring services that were privatised by the Liberals and Nationals back into public hands. Can the minister update the house on the government's efforts to bring road maintenance jobs back in-house at Main Roads Western Australia, including in Manjimup?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

I thank the member for Warren–Blackwood for that question. Of course, as was noted yesterday in this place, many of us got to spend Sunday and Monday in her electorate. What a great time we had! We also saw firsthand the strong advocacy and representation this member is giving to those regional communities.

We all know that the previous Liberal–National government was very much focused on privatising, outsourcing and losing regional jobs. That was the focus of the Liberals and Nationals in government. One of the decisions we have made is to bring Main Roads network contracts back in-house, which will create 660 permanent jobs, with 490 of those in regional WA. It will mean better pay and conditions for the workers. It will mean increased access to leave. Of course, it will mean that the government can be far better and far more efficient in delivering services across the state. So far, we have brought 41 workers back into Main Roads in the wheatbelt, and 50 workers through the midwest and Gascoyne. Members will be happy to know that next year will be a big one, with workers coming back in-house in the goldfields, the Pilbara, the great southern and the south west, as well as throughout the metropolitan area. That will be huge for those communities.

Of course, Manjimup will now get a new Main Roads office right in the middle of town. This new Main Roads office will accommodate 20 employees, including a project manager; network inspection and operations personnel; maintenance, safety and environmental officers; and business support officers. The new Rose Street office will be central and workers will be able to access all the great cafes and other activities happening in town. We will make sure that Main Roads is back in the centre of those regional communities. We all saw on Monday and Sunday how these towns and communities have so much opportunity and are under so much pressure. More and more people want to live there. We can look at the significant economic activity that is happening around the area and, of course, the produce that continues to come from that town. We know that Manjimup and surrounding towns will continue to grow, and we really want to support that. We are so pleased to be reversing the privatisation that happened under the Liberal–National government—the sacking of regional workers that happened under its watch. We are now bringing permanent employees back to our regional towns.