

BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY — TRAINING

**196. Ms E.L. HAMILTON to the Minister for Training and Workforce Development:**

I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to boost employment in Western Australia's building and construction sector.

- (1) Will the minister outline how this government is delivering TAFE and training initiatives such as the group training organisation wage subsidy to boost our local skilled workforce?
- (2) Will the minister advise how these initiatives are supporting the construction of more houses for WA?

**Ms S.F. McGURK replied:**

- (1)–(2) As the Premier told us earlier, it was great to be at the Construction Training Fund's Construction Futures Centre today with apprentices and the Housing Industry Association to announce an additional 150 places under the group training organisation wage subsidy program. Most members would be aware that group training organisations are a great initiative and make apprentices accessible for small and medium-sized businesses. It is good for businesses because they might be in a position to take an apprentice for two or maybe three years, but maybe not commit to the whole four years. For apprentices, it gives exposure to a range of different skills because they can work between employers and the group training organisation is the host and, technically, the employer of those apprentices.

In 2022, the government announced the fulfilment of an election commitment to have 300 places for group training organisations for small and medium-sized businesses in building and construction that were working on government contracts. The government decided to expand that using the same 300 places so that those places would be available for residential and commercial construction as well, because we could see that was where the pressure was. Those 300 places were quickly taken up. We expanded them to another 150 places. Within two months those 150 places were taken up. It is a very generous subsidy—about \$136 000 for a full apprenticeship period for the group training organisation. It makes taking on an apprentice accessible for small and medium-sized businesses.

As the Premier said, with this announcement there will be another 150 places. By the time these places are taken up, that will be 600 additional apprentices in construction-related trades out there in the system. It is a great outcome. We were there today with Noah, Ava and Marcus. Noah is a first-year plumbing apprentice and Ava and Marcus are second-year carpentry apprentices. It was great to meet them, and it is great to see the work the Construction Training Fund is doing. The futures centre is a showcase of all things construction. School students and prospective students go through there and get a feel for construction in residential and commercial, and also in the civil and resources sectors as well. We are starting to see the results of our efforts in vocational training in a range of areas, but particularly around construction. As at December last year, there were 10 852 apprentices and trainees in building and construction in our state. It is remarkable. It is going gangbusters!

I am really keen to hammer this message home. Whether it is a young person who has recently finished school looking to get a start in the workforce or a mature-aged person, there are many training pathways to take. Opportunities are available if they want to work in building and construction.

Madam Speaker, I do not know whether I really got the response I was after to “hammering” the message home! It is probably not a great joke when you have to repeat it!

There is lots happening with vocational training and lots happening with building and construction. I am very proud of the work this government is doing.