

BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

**162. Mr S.N. AUBREY to the Minister for Training:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to creating a pipeline of skilled workers in Western Australia's building and construction industry.

- (1) Can the minister advise the house how this government is helping young people find employment in the building and construction industry?
- (2) Can the minister outline how these initiatives are providing a boost to WA's building and construction workforce?

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

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for this question because it is important to have an opportunity to talk about the practical things that this government is focused on to match young people with the jobs we know are out there. Particularly when it comes to the construction industry, there is huge demand at the moment, and we are doing everything we can to work with government agencies across the board, with private industry and with training providers to link up people, and particularly young people, with those jobs that we know are out there.

It is sometimes said that learning to drive gives us the keys to freedom, but for young workers a driver's licence is also the key to employment. The program I was out talking about with the Premier this morning is a \$1.25 million program funded by the Construction Training Fund. It will allow 120 young people, most of them in their pre-apprenticeship training in the construction industry, to focus on their driving skills in order for them to get their licence. It is a very practical program. It is largely a response to the feedback we were getting from employers, particularly in 2021 during the Jobs and Skills Summit when a number of employees across the board, but particularly in construction, said they really needed young people to get their drivers' licences. It is not always a requirement for a job, but in the construction industry it really will give them the edge in getting employment in the industry and for many it will just mean the practicalities of them getting to different jobs. We were there with the Construction Training Fund's driver's licence training support program. This program will focus on giving 120 young people assistance to get their driver's licence. It is a pilot program that will go to the middle of next year, and then it will be assessed to see whether it is a good use of Construction Training Fund money.

Can I give a shout-out to a couple of young people we met this morning. Shea Dall from Quairading took me off-road for a bit of four-wheel drive training. I also acknowledge Noah Walters, who took the Premier for a spin and demonstrated his extreme emergency braking skills. How was that, Premier? We were all impressed by Tatianna Bergen from Baldvis Secondary College, who did a great job speaking about how this program will help her achieve her desire to start a career in scaffolding and perhaps in the mining industry.

It is a great practical program and it complements the work being done via the Minister for Transport, which is a \$10 million driver access and equity program focused on helping disadvantaged young people, particularly in regional and remote areas, to get their driver's licence. We have a range of different programs to make sure we give young people those practical skills.

Members have heard me talk in this chamber before about the amount of work we are doing on vocational training, whether it is assisting young people getting their driver's licence or assisting people getting into the construction industry; it is very practical. We have job-ready programs in infrastructure and bricklaying. These are industry-backed programs—short, sharp training for new job entrants. There is a \$32.4 million program to help small and medium-sized businesses access an additional 300 apprentices and trainees through group training organisations. Again, that is hugely practical assistance for those many small and medium-sized businesses that are not able to commit to taking on an apprentice but want to do their bit to assist people training in industries. I think many of us have had exposure to group training organisations and know what good work they do. Finally, there is \$3.4 million to support employers take on more mature age apprentices in the construction trades. These are the sorts of things we are doing to make sure we get workers into the construction industry as quickly as possible, get them skilled up and not only meet those immediate needs in the industry, but have ongoing jobs in the future.