

## SHIPPING TASKFORCE

*Statement by Minister assisting the Minister for Transport*

**MR D.R. MICHAEL (Balcatta — Minister assisting the Minister for Transport)** [1.10 pm]: The WA Shipping and Supply Chain Taskforce was established last year in the wake of flooding events that effectively isolated Perth and most of the state from its sources of groceries and other freight. The taskforce was asked to consider how coastal shipping services could be utilised in future to reduce the impact of recurrent floods and fire events, and also how supply chains could be made more resilient. The co-chairs of the taskforce, Hon Kyle McGinn and the member for Kingsley—previously in her role as parliamentary secretary to the former Minister for Ports—have recently submitted their report for the consideration of government. The report has been released publicly and has been posted to the webpage that was set up when the taskforce was initiated. The companies and agencies that made submissions and attended forums have been sent a copy directly and invited to comment.

The report focuses on support for national shipping regulatory reform and policy changes, which are primarily the responsibility of the federal government. The states have minimal regulatory roles in this shipping space. There is very little Australian-owned shipping and very few Australians employed on commercial shipping servicing the country. We would like to see this change for our national and WA interest.

Other themes in the report are support for training opportunities for Western Australians on vessels serving Australia, even though vessels are foreign flagged and crewed; support for supply chain resilience improvements, especially in remote WA regions such as the Kimberley—this could take the form of common-use distribution centres to provide added protection against shortages arising from regular wet season events—cost savings for remote communities; and support for upgrades to the trans-national railway line corridor in view of the floods in 2022 that highlighted our dependence on it. The report also recommends that the Department of Transport establish a shipping and supply chain policy unit within its existing freight–ports policy area to propel these policy initiatives, especially with Canberra. I am pleased to report that this recommendation has already been accepted and is being progressed.

The federal government has also recently received a report from its Australian Strategic Fleet Taskforce that focused on an announced policy for the acquisition or contracting of a fleet of up to 12 vessels to support the supply of essential goods and services for Australia during times of international unrest or climatic events. Our task is to ensure that we align our need for more substantial coastal trading capacity with the federal government’s policy agenda.

I thank the member for Kingsley for her contribution to the report, and Hon Kyle McGinn, who will stay involved in the taskforce to continue to research and work with our agencies and the commonwealth. I have asked the member for Kimberley to join Hon Kyle McGinn as the joint public face for future activities of the taskforce.