

JOBS — RECRUITMENT

52. Ms H.M. BEAZLEY to the Minister for Police:

I refer to measures taken by the McGowan Labor government to address workforce shortages occurring across the economy.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house what initiatives the Western Australian government is taking to fill job vacancies in crucial roles, including police officers, nurses and teachers?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house what feedback has been received on these initiatives so far?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I thank the member for her question. It is enjoyable to answer.

- (1)–(2) As the member would be aware, last week we gave notice of my impending little mission to the UK. I will take with me a Deputy Commissioner of Police and four police officers, all of whom are former UK or Irish police officers who have served for an extensive period in Western Australia and are absolute converts to the wonders of Western Australia and the benefits of being a police officer here. We are also going in the company of Stephen Moir from the Motor Trade Association of Western Australia and there will be a representative from the Australian Hotels Association (WA). Bradley Woods has just done a similar thing to the US and is a bit exhausted, so he is sending someone along.

We will be advocating whilst we are there. I have not gone right through the itinerary, but it is packed. It is something like seven cities in nine days. It will mostly be trade expos, other measures and other events at which we will try to antagonise and irritate some of the locals who are not that happy about us seeking to steal their best people. We will be trying to get as much free publicity in that regard as we can.

We have formal events where we will be handing out information and meeting with people, including some of those police officers who have expressed interest in coming to Western Australia. We will be promoting to just about every sector. There are 31 000 jobs waiting here in Western Australia, and we managed to penetrate the UK and Irish media with that marketing headline. It got a lot of coverage. It was well received over there in terms of the attractiveness of Western Australia. We brought to their attention not only the strength of the economy and the massive employment opportunities for people in Western Australia, but also the very attractive returns for people doing exactly the same job as they are currently doing in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

It is a very easy sell. We will tell people what a wonderful place we live in. We live in the best place on the planet. We have the strongest economy, if not the equal-strongest economy in the world. We have enormous opportunity and the lowest cost of living in Australia. By comparison, for instance, an energy bill in the United Kingdom is twice what it is here in Western Australia. That is an easy sell. There are cost-of-living benefits as well. Our cost of living is significantly lower in Western Australia, but police officers are also paid much more than they are paid elsewhere. We had some comparative assessment done of the average pay for waitstaff, for instance. A waitperson in the UK might be paid, on average, around \$29 957 a year; I have converted it to Australian dollars. Here in Perth or anywhere in this state, they could get, on average, \$49 896. Interestingly, we are looking for mining workers.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Ten thousand.

Mr P. PAPALIA: A lot of them.

In the UK, the average wage of a mining worker is \$54 246. Members will not be surprised to learn that the average wage here is about \$121 000. A GP—where is Dr Jags? There he is! The wage of a GP in the UK is very sad at \$75 714, on average. Here, it is \$100 798. I do not think Jags is an average GP!

It is very appropriate to consider nurses. We have attracted many thousands of nurses and we are continuing to attract them. On average, the wage of a nurse in the UK is \$68 094. Here, it is \$100 519. We have very good conditions. Of course, police on average get \$65 262 in the UK after about seven years on the job. We are only taking people with a minimum of three years' experience, but when they get here, they will be getting \$87 000 from day one as their wage. It is incredibly attractive. It is not going to be a difficult sell. I can tell members that we have had more than 1 000 expressions of interest from the UK for police positions, and there have also been 831 applications for police officers. Therefore, we will be taking a team of experienced police officers. We can get them to say what the experience was like for them, but also we are going to start filtering through to make sure that we get the absolute best. We will do that for everybody. Western Australia is the most attractive place on the planet. It is not going to be hard to attract people.