

**FUTURE BATTERY INDUSTRIES COOPERATIVE RESEARCH CENTRE —
CATHODE PRECURSOR PRODUCTION PILOT PLANT**

Statement by Minister for Mines and Petroleum

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Mines and Petroleum) [9.15 am]: I would like to inform the house of a significant milestone in Western Australia's growing battery minerals processing capability. Last month, work commenced on the Future Battery Industries Cooperative Research Centre's cathode precursor production pilot plant. The pilot aims to demonstrate Australia's capability to produce cost-effective, high-quality nickel, cobalt and manganese for producing precursor cathode active materials. PCAM is a form of advanced chemical manufacturing and is a key material used in lithium-ion batteries to power electric vehicles.

The McGowan government, through the Minerals Research Institute of Western Australia, has invested \$900 000 in the project, which is led by Curtin University. The Future Battery Industries Cooperative Research Centre and its partners will invest \$9.2 million in cash and \$9.2 million in kind to develop the pilot plant. Commissioning of the plant is expected to begin in early 2022, followed by an 18-month trial. Western Australia's downstream battery minerals processing capabilities continue to grow. Last month, BHP Nickel West opened Australia's first nickel sulphate plant at its refinery in Kwinana. We also saw Alcoa and FYI Resources sign a binding high purity alumina joint venture term sheet. Just last week, I cut the ribbon at First Quantum Minerals' Shoemaker-Levy mine at Ravensthorpe. This new mine will add decades to the life of FQM's rejuvenated Ravensthorpe nickel-cobalt operation. It will supply thousands of tonnes per annum of a mixed nickel-cobalt hydroxide intermediate product used in the production of nickel sulphate. Nickel sulphate is a key material in lithium-ion batteries for electric vehicles.

These recent developments underline WA's once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be a leader in this industry. Western Australia has all the battery minerals needed to make batteries and energy technologies. We have a stable and robust economy with low sovereign risk. We are world leaders in research and development, and the only state with a clear strategy to support the development of a battery minerals industry. The McGowan Labor government's *Future battery industry strategy Western Australia* will drive the development of this emerging industry. It is a plan to build on our state's expertise in the resources industry and move further along the value chain into downstream processing activities. We have also committed \$13.2 million to facilitate global investment in precursor cathode manufacturing as part of our WA recovery plan. These initiatives will create WA jobs, contribute to skills development and economic diversification, and maximise benefits to regional communities. On behalf of the Labor government, I congratulate the FBI CRC.