



HON JON FORD MLC

MEMBER FOR MINING AND PASTORAL REGION



Hon Brian Ellis MLC
Chair
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Legislative Council
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

25 June 2011

Dear Brian

Petition No 114 – WA Jobs from WA Resources

I strongly urge the committee to conduct an inquiry into the merits of legislating to ensure skilled work for our major resources projects is performed in Western Australia.

There is no doubt that Western Australia is currently undergoing an unprecedented resources boom. This boom provides a once in a generation opportunity to develop a skilled workforce that will create new industries and jobs for the future.

While there are construction jobs available in Western Australia's North West as the Gorgon and other projects like it are being built, the skilled work we need to create apprenticeships and skills that last beyond the boom is being done overseas.

Western Australia is at risk of being choked out of business - steel fabrication workshops sit empty as more and more work goes offshore.

Some workshops have closed and others have let workers go and cannot offer apprenticeships to young Western Australians.

Industry informs me that project design and engineering work is being done in places such as Houston, Yokohama, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur instead of Perth or anywhere else in Western Australia. Young engineers have no choice but to go overseas if they want to design WA projects.

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Every Western Australian deserves their fair share of our mining prosperity and every Western Australian should benefit from the boom.

The Leader of the Opposition has introduced the *Skilled Local Jobs Bill 2011* into the Legislative Assembly. This bill if passed would go a long way towards ensuring the big mining and resource companies use local fabrication and manufacturing companies by requiring all projects over \$200 million to have Skilled Work Agreements which would be tabled in Parliament.

Under the Skilled Work Agreement provisions of the bill the responsible Minister must use his or her best endeavours to promote the development and long-term viability of services in the State with a view to the creation and expansion of a skilled workforce in the State for the project and for future work in the State.

The Skilled Work Agreement process would also require our major resources project proponents to provide regular reports to Parliament that outline their performance in meeting the commitments they have made in their Skilled Work Agreements.

Legislation such as the *Skilled Local Jobs Bill 2011* will help provide local businesses with the information they need to compete and participate on a level playing field.

Parliament needs to legislate to ensure there is transparency around the tender process of projects without adding to the burden of the approvals process

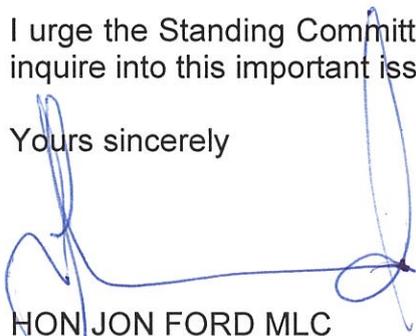
Any legislation will help ensure project proponents are up front and transparent about how they will employ Western Australia's underutilised skilled manufacturing workforce.

The legacy from this new resources boom should be a highly trained and highly skilled workforce.

Now is the time to ensure the benefits of the resources boom flow back to all Western Australians.

I urge the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs to inquire into this important issue.

Yours sincerely



HON JON FORD MLC
Member for the Mining and Pastoral Region

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