Golden goose waning, find new eggs

As WA households struggle to maintain their living standards, Treasurer Rita Saffioti faces an increasingly uncomfortable reality — our mining golden goose may be losing some of its shine.

Iron ore prices have fallen almost 15 per cent over the past year, potentially stripping $1.44 billion from WA's annual royalty revenue.

The Treasurer will undoubtedly remind us that iron ore, at around US$90 a tonne, remains above the State Budget's conservative forecast of US$85. But that conveniently ignores how years of extraordinary mining revenues have helped bankroll the Cook Government's enthusiasm for spending taxpayer money on everything from racetracks to rugby clubs.

Now comes news that confidence across WA's mining sector has plummeted (*WestBusiness*, 20/10).

Enter AUKUS,



Rita Saffioti

enthusiastically promoted by Premier Roger Cook and his Treasurer as the great economic diversification opportunity.

Certainly AUKUS promises jobs and investment. But unlike mining, much of this activity will depend on taxpayer funding, while competing for already scarce skilled workers, driving up costs and inflation, and potentially adding to more public debt.

Meanwhile, the productivity-enhancing Westport development at Kwinana faces possible delays as AUKUS demands priority.

WA doesn't need another taxpayer-funded economic dependency. It needs a thriving, competitive private sector, including small businesses, generating sustainable wealth and genuine productivity growth.

Otherwise, our economic eggs will remain firmly in one basket — and that basket is beginning to look dangerously frayed.

Ross Taylor, Claremont

Know small to do big

John Rome (*Letters*, 21/10) is clearly a keen Labor supporter.

However, it should be quite obvious that if government has no idea how a small business operates, then there is no chance it will know how a big business — government — operates.

M.E. Andrijich, Toodyay