

Division 19: Peel Development Commission, \$1 584 000—

Mr J.M. Francis, Chairman.

Mr B.J. Grylls, Minister for Regional Development.

Ms C. Yates, Acting Chief Executive Officer.

Ms H. Slater, Manager, Corporate Services.

Mr P.B. Rosair, Director General, Department of Regional Development and Lands.

Mr A.D. Kerr, Manager, Financial Services, Department of Regional Development and Lands.

Ms A. Dann, Principal Policy Adviser, Office of the Minister for Regional Development.

Mrs J. Sounness, Principal Policy Adviser, Office of the Minister for Regional Development.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIRMAN: I give the call to the member for Darling Range.

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: My question is in regard to the Peel Development Commission. When I was elected as a councillor in 2001, the Peel Development Commission did a report called “Peel Away the Mask”, which identified the social needs of the Peel region. I draw the minister’s attention to a line item in the budget papers on page 255, “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency”. The first dot point refers to the Peel region having a higher than average unemployment rate. I wonder if the minister could outline some of the work the commission has done to address high unemployment in the Peel region.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: I thank the member for the question. I think the member is referring to the Pinjarra training facility. This is a partnership between government and the private sector. There is a major investment in mining infrastructure refurbishment. A facility is being put in Pinjar. It is a major training facility for young apprentices working on equipment from the Western Australian mining sector. The best way I know of providing training is in the context of the workforce. It is training people in the skills that are needed. That is certainly happening. Hopefully, we can use partnerships with the private sector to deliver more on-the-job training, getting young kids trained up, especially in areas of high unemployment. It is a very good project and one that we are very happy to support.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: Further to that point, one of the real issues about Peel and Mandurah more specifically is the fact that the demographics of poverty are alike to those in the Kimberley—unemployment, youth suicide, and ill-health in the major population. There is a large aged population. I wonder whether the minister would actually consider looking at the Peel region and Mandurah city as part of his royalties for regions targets, simply because of the demographics. I know that the member for Mandurah has had his say. There could be simple things such as fuel cards for everybody who is entitled. My mum says “Thank you, Brendon” every time she gets into a taxi. She lives in Broome. If she needs to do the shopping and we are not around, it helps. There are a lot of people in Mandurah who need that leg up. I am the member for Kimberley, so I know what it is like to have a community that borders on poverty and has all the disadvantages of being involved in the tyranny of distance. The only thing the people of Mandurah have that is different from what we have, which gives them a leg up, is the rail line. While I am at it, the minister can give us rail in Kununurra; it would be very well appreciated. I am putting in a good word for Mandurah, because obviously they need it. I know the minister is trying to do the right thing, but this is something that would actually show the minister to be a great statesman, in my view.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: I thank the member for Kimberley for her concern for the Peel region. I understand what she is saying, but I actually do not think she can compare service delivery and infrastructure delivery in the Peel region with service delivery and infrastructure in the Kimberley. In this budget—this issue did not come up today—we have allocated \$15 million to better support alcohol dependency in the Kimberley and the Pilbara; it is something that we are very proud of. We have long been criticised for the bans, which the member for Kimberley started in Fitzroy Crossing, and which I wholeheartedly support. We have continued that through the work of Minister Waldron. The criticism was that there are not enough support services around that.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: Yes, and we appreciate that.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: That money is going to put 27 full-time equivalent staff into providing support.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: But there are also the same problems in Mandurah. That is my point.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: As I said, in my opinion the good people of Mandurah have access to a higher level of government service delivery. If it can be demonstrated to me that that is not the case, the member will have a strong case for further investment.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: Thank you, minister.

The appropriation was recommended.