

ABORIGINAL RANGER PROGRAM

**612. Ms J. FARRER to the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade:**

I refer to the government's commitment to provide more employment opportunities for young Aboriginal men and women. How will the Aboriginal ranger program provide real jobs and real economic benefits for young Indigenous people in my community?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

I thank the member for Kimberley for the question. The government is deeply committed to providing real jobs for Aboriginal men and women on country. We demonstrated this in our first budget by delivering on our commitment of \$20 million over five years for the Aboriginal ranger program. This is a policy and an achievement that I am very proud of. Members will know that across Western Australia, Aboriginal ranger programs are in place in various regional communities, particularly in the Kimberley and the Pilbara. This funding will allow Aboriginal rangers to be employed in greater numbers and trained in a range of land and sea management initiatives, including tourism operations, land management, and protecting and conserving important cultural and environmental parts of Western Australia. The Indigenous ranger jobs will require accredited conservation and land management qualifications, and this funding will assist Aboriginal men and women to get that training. The expressions of interest process closed on Tuesday. We have had a lot of interest from Aboriginal organisations. Many groups applied, and those applications are currently being assessed. We have allocated \$4 million towards this program in the first round of 2017–18. I have met Aboriginal rangers in a range of locations over the years and I always get the sense that the men and women involved have a deep feeling of pride in their job. These days, they are generally young people with lots of commitment to their area and a connection with their land. They are interested in demonstrating this by showing and educating people about the innate value of the land on which they live and work. I am very pleased to be able to expand this terrific initiative that will ensure that many more young Aboriginal men and women get the opportunity to be rangers.