

DOLPHIN DISCOVERY CENTRE

146. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Regional Development:

Under the minister's watch, we have seen the Bunbury premier tourism attraction, the Dolphin Discovery Centre, which was funded by royalties for regions, enter voluntary administration. How long has the minister known that the Dolphin Discovery Centre was in financial trouble, and was he approached by the then CEO for financial assistance?

Mr D.T. PUNCH replied:

The Dolphin Discovery Centre is a fabulous tourism attraction in Bunbury, frequently used by international visitors, local visitors and volunteers who flock to it, and it is still open and operating. It is, of course, managed by an independent Dolphin Discovery Centre incorporated body that is not accountable to government. It leases the building from government. My office is always open to the Dolphin Discovery Centre to discuss its needs with us, as it has done on occasions post-COVID when many tourism operators and tourism operations really struggled with the downturn of visitation during the COVID period. It, like many other organisations, is managing that process, and when it was ready, it made the decision to call in the voluntary receiver. When it has the recommendations from the voluntary receiver, I am sure that it will come to see me. It absolutely knows that we support the Dolphin Discovery Centre as a very valuable tourism operation in Bunbury. In fact, all around the region, we have a Minister for Tourism fighting for tourism in Western Australia, while members opposite fight over who should ask the question of the day. I wonder how long it took them to decide who should ask that question. I have been sitting here waiting for this question with bated breath. Has it come? It has taken until today. I think there have been quite a few debates about who should get that particular question, while our Minister for Tourism is out there getting events, looking at how to support tourism, building visitor numbers and making this state a great state.