

REGIONAL FUNDING - PRIORITISATION

557. Hon NIGEL HALLETT to the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development:

My question without notice of which some notice has been given -

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members! Hon Nigel Hallett wants to ask a question. If some members do not want to ask a question, they can continue to interject, but I want to listen to him.

Hon NIGEL HALLETT: My question is to the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development. Can the minister please explain the criteria by which the government prioritises the allocation of funds to the nine regions?

Hon JON FORD replied:

I thank Hon Nigel Hallett for some notice of the question. I presume that the question is about the regional investment fund.

With regard to the allocation to the nine regions through grants from the regional investment fund, all RIF schemes support the government's regional development policy, "Regional Western Australia: A Better Place To Live". The policy embraces a triple-bottom-line approach, which integrates economic, social and environmental issues and opportunities. Each RIF scheme has clear eligibility criteria that are used for the assessment of all applications. The extent to which the eligibility criteria are met by applicants is a key factor in determining funding allocations. Each RIF application is assessed by the Department of Local Government and Regional Development and referred to an assessment panel. The panel then provides advice to the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development, who can approve funding of up to \$150 000 for individual projects. For larger amounts, the cabinet standing committee on regional policy makes the funding decisions. Cabinet approval of CSCRП decisions is required. For the regional infrastructure funding program, the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development cannot approve any funding. CSCRП and cabinet approval is required. For the regional development scheme, the regional development commission boards provide advice to the minister, who makes the final funding decision.