

COMMUNITY POOL REVITALISATION PROGRAM

**857. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:**

I understand that there have been some changes to the community pool revitalisation program recently. Can the minister please update the house on the progress of this royalties for regions program?

**Ms M.J. DAVIES replied:**

I thank the member for the question and his interest in all things sport and recreation in his electorate and the state. For members who are not aware, the community pools revitalisation program was an election commitment that we took to the 2013 state election. It is funded by royalties for regions and acknowledges that regional pools are the centres and hubs of many of our regional communities but are very expensive to maintain. Quite often local governments with a very small rate base struggle to maintain what is an important facility for the community. The program was launched last year and successfully invested \$2.7 million into 91 pools and five water playgrounds across regional Western Australia. About two-thirds of the funding has been allocated to capital upgrades and equipment for these regional pools. As part of this funding, we also provided a grant of \$335 000 to Leisure Institute of Western Australia Aquatics to assist with the purchase of—I am not going to say it—“defibs”, oxygenating socks and lifeguard and pool operation courses for regional local government, which are often the managers of these pools. The role of those community pools cannot be underestimated. They not only provide an opportunity for people to get active and be fit, but also are vibrant social hubs for these communities. In the past week I visited two. At about 7.30 pm I dropped in to the Karratha Leisureplex. At that point the pool was being used by the highly successful water polo club, which is the fastest growing club in the state and is doing incredibly well hosting the national championships next year. A large number of kids and community members were down there, even at 7.30 at night.

Over the weekend, the Minister for Housing, the member for South West Region and I opened the new Collie swimming pool that has been refurbished. This grant will assist the Shire of Collie to make sure that it can maintain that fantastic facility for another 50 years as a great hub for the community. In this next round we have also enhanced the flexibility for local governments, recognising that the \$30 000 investment might need to be banked for a couple of years so they can do bigger projects. Local governments can bank it and spend it over a number of years, which is some feedback that local government provided to us and we have improved the flexibility of the program as a result. It is a great program funded by royalties for regions that is delivering a fantastic outcome in regional WA.