

GWOONWARDU MIA ABORIGINAL CULTURAL CENTRE

1043. Mr D.T. PUNCH to the Minister for Culture and the Arts:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's investment in cultural facilities across regional Western Australia. Can the minister update the house on how the reopening of the Gwoonwardu Mia Aboriginal cultural centre will provide new tourism experiences in the region and support local business?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

I thank the member for Bunbury for his question.

This is a very important and wonderful opportunity for the people in the Gascoyne, particularly those in Carnarvon. Last Thursday, I was in Carnarvon with the Minister for Regional Development, Hon Alannah MacTiernan, to celebrate with the community there, particularly the Aboriginal community, the reopening of this important facility known as the Gwoonwardu Mia Aboriginal cultural centre.

As you may be aware, Mr Speaker, the previous Labor government built that cultural centre in the early 2000s. Unfortunately, it closed in 2015. Essentially, it lay almost derelict throughout the period of the previous government. It was sad that the previous government did not see the importance of this centre and work towards reopening it, because it is a magnificent facility that sits along the entrance road into the Carnarvon town site. It has huge potential. But it took a Labor government, through the tenacity of the Minister for Regional Development, to ensure that this facility was reopened. Unlike the local member there, she worked closely with the people of Carnarvon, particularly Indigenous groups, to make sure the reopening of this centre was realised. Hon Alannah MacTiernan approached me, as Minister for Culture and the Arts, seeking support from the Western Australian Museum. That is an important step, because the Western Australian Museum will now manage the centre in close consultation with the Indigenous traditional owners of the area. The museum will work towards ensuring it not only delivers a quality tourism product but also celebrates the rich Indigenous history of the area and creates training and job opportunities.

This is a very, very big investment in a regional cultural centre of this nature. We look forward now, through the investment by the McGowan government, to ensuring that the broader community is embraced in this re-established, reopened centre. We will see training opportunities. The cafe will begin catering for events within the cultural centre and outside opportunities as well. We will see some training opportunities for young people, particularly through tourism opportunities now that the centre has reopened. It has huge potential also for Indigenous arts. We know the Gascoyne region has some magnificent Indigenous artists. This will be a gravitational place for many of those artists to ensure that they have their works celebrated and exhibited. It will also, of course, enable people visiting the region, from within the state, interstate and overseas, to see the wonderful, wonderful rich cultural history within the Gascoyne region celebrated through this centre.

I applaud the Indigenous community there; the Shire of Carnarvon; the other key stakeholders, including local businesses; and the schoolchildren. There were several hundred people at the opening on Thursday. They were very positive about the future of this magnificent centre. It will deliver a high-quality tourism product and tourism and job opportunities for people in that region, particularly the Indigenous people. It is another example of this government delivering high-quality infrastructure and opportunities to the people of Western Australia in a consultative way by working with the broader community, unlike and contrasting starkly with the lack of effort by anybody on that side when they were in power when they let that centre remain closed. We have reopened it. It is a great thing for Carnarvon and a great thing for the Gascoyne region.