

INNOVATORS - FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

622. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Science and Innovation:

I refer to financial assistance for our state's innovators.

- (1) How many applications were received for this year's Inventor of the Year Awards?
- (2) How much money will be available to be won, and by how many people?
- (3) What grants does the government provide to inventors in the state to support the commercialisation of their products?
- (4) What has replaced the WA innovation support scheme?
- (5) Why was this support scheme dropped?

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH replied:

On behalf of the Leader of the House, I thank the member for some notice of this question. The Minister for Science and Innovation has provided the following response -

- (1) A total of 157 applications were received.
- (2) A total of \$255 600 cash or in-kind will be provided to eight recipients.
- (3) The Department of Industry and Resources provides support through its innovation commercialisation assistance schemes. The schemes include the Western Australian innovation capability development scheme, capital access, the business development and skills training scheme for the biotechnology industry and the innovation in information and communications technology program. The department has approved funding of \$772 000 in financial assistance to companies seeking to develop their products and services in innovation and related information and communications technology and biotechnology areas. The department is committing an additional \$300 000 to fund the business development and skills training scheme for innovative technology-based Western Australian businesses. The department provided sponsorship for WA companies to attend the national Commercialisation Expo 2006 held in Melbourne in June. This provided companies with the opportunity to attend a range of commercialisation activities, pitch sessions to venture capitalists and business-matching sessions.

In addition, the department is providing other services to assist the state's inventors, including an innovation services director to identify the key services to assist the state's innovators, which is being finalised; and a mentoring program to bring together existing mentor groups and develop specific mentors to assist both start-up and established companies to develop their products and services. The state has become a member of the Australian Technology Showcase. The ATS program is a promotional and networking government program targeted at small and medium-sized Australian business enterprises with innovative, cutting-edge technologies. The innovation centre provides innovation seminars and workshops targeted at specific areas of business and technology development important to technology and innovation-based companies.

- (4)-(5) The scheme ceased to operate after the last funding round in 2001. Since then the commonwealth government introduced the offset component of the research and development tax concession scheme, which provides substantial financial support on an entitlement basis. This support is accessed by more than 200 emerging innovation WA companies across all sectors on an annual basis.