

REGIONAL INVESTMENT FUND

**244. Hon NIGEL HALLETT to the Minister for Regional Development:**

In view of the minister's response to a question asked on 28 March 2007 on page 795 in *Hansard*, will the minister please indicate the amount of funds which have been approved but which remain unpaid in respect of the last tranche of the regional investment fund?

**Hon JON FORD replied:**

I thank Hon Nigel Hallett for the question. As I indicated previously, the amount of approvals under the regional investment fund as at 28 March was \$45 237 160 and the total expenditure was \$19 155 320.28. Consequently, the amount approved but not yet expended is \$26 081 839.72. The major reasons for expenditure levels lagging behind approvals are problems associated with applicants securing funding from other sources for their projects, which had caused projects to be delayed; and difficulties in contracting tradespeople and other skilled occupations in regional areas, which has caused delays in project commencement dates and resulted in cost increases for projects. I have asked my agency, in cooperation with my office, to carry out a review of those particular approved projects to see what can be done to expedite them.