

BIOTECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY

**333. Mr R.C. KUCERA to the Minister for Industry and Enterprise:**

I acknowledge the presence in the public gallery today of the wind beneath my wings - my wife - on the occasion of our fortieth wedding anniversary this week. I acknowledge her for putting up with me for that long!

Members: Hear, hear!

**Mr R.C. KUCERA:** She is very special.

Having had the privilege earlier this year to see the enormous technological advances being made by our major trading partner, Japan, will the minister update the house on the Carpenter government's progress in developing a strong biotechnology industry in Western Australia?

**Mr F.M. LOGAN replied:**

I thank the member for the question and acknowledge his interest in biotechnology. The state government is committed to diversifying Western Australia's economy beyond the current resources boom by building a solid biotechnology industry, which is one of four key industries on which it is concentrating. One of the best ways in which to do this is to build common-user infrastructure that will allow biotechnology companies to do their research, testing, development and commercialisation in Western Australia. Common-user infrastructure such as the common-user facility at the Australian Marine Complex has proved to be invaluable in growing local industry. A key element of this infrastructure - a multimillion dollar phase 1-2 clinical trials facility - was announced by the Premier in April. We know that that will prove to be a tremendous boost to the biotechnology and biomedical industries in Western Australia when it becomes operational at the end of next year.

Yesterday I had the pleasure of opening another vital piece of infrastructure - WA's first common-user access research and commercialisation clean-room laboratory at Murdoch University. It is based inside what would seem from the outside to be a shed, but it is the cleanest shed in Western Australia. Inside are two specially built ultra-clean rooms with interlocking air doors, which separate bacteria from the outside world to create the cleanest environment possible. The facility was developed by WA biotechnology company OrthoCell Pty Ltd with the support of the Department of Industry and Resources and the Murdoch Westscheme Enterprise Partnership fund. I am advised that OrthoCell will use one of the clean rooms to produce tendon therapies for clinical trial development and commercialisation. That research will focus on biological therapies for tissue repair and the regeneration of tendons, which will assist with one of the most common forms of musculoskeletal ailments in the body. OrthoCell's chief executive officer, Paul Anderson, said that this kind of research and technology development could not occur without this new facility. Once again, it is another building block in the creation of a viable, growing biotechnology industry in Western Australia, which is a key platform in our beyond the boom strategy.

**The SPEAKER:** A good and quick answer!

Several members interjected.