

GREAT SOUTHERN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION — BRUCE MANNING — RETIREMENT

Statement by Minister for Regional Development

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Regional Development) [12.11 pm]: I would like to inform the house of the departure of long-serving Great Southern Development Commission chair, Bruce Manning. Our regional development commissions play such a crucial role in connecting business with government, and there are few who have contributed more to the economic development of the great southern than Bruce. He has been a passionate advocate for the region during his 23 years leading the GSDC as CEO and, subsequently, chair, and his unwavering dedication and exceptional service have made a lasting impact on the region. Most notably, he oversaw the delivery of the \$130 million Albany waterfront development and the Albany Entertainment Centre, and the creation of the Munda Biddi Trail and the Bibbulmun Track. Bruce was also instrumental in the attraction and the expansion of the tertiary education presence within the region with the delivery of the University of Western Australia science building.

His unwavering support for local businesses, agricultural advancements, tourism and infrastructure projects has played a pivotal role in enhancing the region's economic potential and the quality of life of its residents. On behalf of the Western Australian government and the people of the great southern, I extend my deepest gratitude for his outstanding service to the region. Bruce's tenure as both chief executive officer and chair of the Great Southern Development Commission spanned more than two decades—a remarkable achievement. Bruce's departure from the commission will undoubtedly be felt deeply.

However, I am feeling positive about the future. I am pleased to announce the appointment of Ricky Burgess as our new GSDC chair, effective from 1 September 2023. Ricky has served as chief executive officer of Albany Community Care since 2019, leading a team delivering critical services for the region. She brings with her senior leadership experience across the public sector in Western Australia, previously having worked as CEO of the Western Australian Local Government Association and Perth Zoo, and as director general of the former department of culture and the arts. I have no doubt that the Great Southern Development Commission will continue to make those valuable connections under her leadership.