

SMALL BUSINESS ROUND TABLE — BUNBURY

Statement by Minister for Small Business

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Small Business) [9.07 am]: As part of my continuing round of visits to regional and metropolitan small businesses, I would like to share with the house my recent visit to Bunbury to listen to local small business owners. Throughout the day, I had meetings with the City of Bunbury and the Bunbury Geographe Chamber of Commerce and Industry and I held a small business round table with a number of businesses from a range of sectors including audiovisual and events, child care and education. I was very impressed with the collaboration between stakeholders and the overall commitment small businesses have to the growth and development of Bunbury. I use these meetings as an opportunity and a chance to listen, to hear about how small businesses are going and to point those who might need help to the Small Business Development Corporation. The SBDC offers a range of services, many of them free, to help businesses to start, grow and thrive. Many of its advisers have owned their own small business or worked in one, so the advice they offer is second to none.

While I was at these meetings, I advised the business owners about the McGowan government's level 1 and 2 COVID-19 assistance grants worth \$67 million and \$72 million respectively. The level 1 grants opened last Thursday and the level 2 grants open today. Since the start of the pandemic, the McGowan government has provided more than \$1.7 billion in assistance to small businesses. We have been able to do this because of our good economic management and because we know that small businesses are helping to drive the state's economy as we move further away from the pandemic.

During the discussions it was clear that small business in Bunbury is looking forward to reconnecting as we emerge from the peak of the pandemic and to join in the development of strategies for local recovery. I look forward to meeting more small business people as minister and hearing their stories about why they started their business, what the government can do to help and their plans for the future.