

NEW INDUSTRIES FUND

108. Mr D.T. PUNCH to the Minister for Innovation and ICT:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to supporting businesses right across regional Western Australia. Can the minister outline to the house how the new industries fund will help the local economies of regional communities and support Western Australian jobs?

Mr D.J. KELLY replied:

I thank the member for Bunbury for the question and for his commitment to his part of regional Western Australia. It was with great pleasure that I and the Minister for Regional Development, Hon Alannah MacTiernan, went to the city of Geraldton last Friday to announce the regional component of the new industries fund. We were in the electorate of Geraldton. We announced this new money to encourage innovation at a fantastic social enterprise up there called Pollinators. Pollinators is an absolutely outstanding social enterprise on the main street of Geraldton.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, do not let your minds wander.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Members opposite will be very interested in Pollinators because it is absolutely humming up there. It is full of new businesses; in fact, it is buzzing. But what is interesting about the current state of Pollinators is that until recently it was struggling, but it benefitted from an \$80 000 grant from the \$39 million fund that the member for Bateman referred to. We all know the electorate of Geraldton is not a Labor seat; it is held by the member for Geraldton. Incidentally, we did not see the member for Geraldton while we were there. I understand the member for Geraldton was busily cutting the bottom of his letterhead off, because his letterhead is emblazoned with the words "Delivering royalties for regions to Geraldton and the midwest". I understand that on the day we were there, he was busily rewriting his letterhead, but I digress.

Mr I.C. Blayney interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Geraldton!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr D.J. KELLY: Pollinators was the venue for announcing the regional new industries fund. When we came to government, we made a commitment of \$16.7 million for a new industries fund to encourage innovation across Western Australia, to encourage Western Australian businesses to take on the jobs of the future. As part of that, we committed to a \$4.5 million spend in regional Western Australia. That will encourage innovation, whether it be in Geraldton, Kununurra or Albany. As a government, we know that not every good idea comes from Perth. That is why I was in Geraldton with the Minister for Regional Development, launching that fund. The reception we got up there was absolutely outstanding. Out of that \$4.5 million, \$300 000 will be set aside for each development commission to come up with its own innovation partnership. That will mean that each regional development commission will be putting together an innovation road map so that we can drive innovation in the regions. Across the regions, up to \$1.4 million will be available for statewide programs. In addition, any business in a regional area can participate or apply for an innovation voucher or it can put itself up to be part of the Innovator of the Year Awards. As a government, we understand that if we are going to diversify the Western Australian economy, we have to encourage innovation. I was really pleased to be up there. It is the sort of commitment that we have to regional Western Australia, along with our continuing commitment to royalties for regions. We are behind entrepreneurs in regional Western Australia, unlike the member for Moore, who has been asleep for the past five years. We are getting on with the job of encouraging regional job growth in Western Australia.