

COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE NETWORK

Statement

HON MIA DAVIES (Agricultural) [10.07 pm]: I rise tonight to draw members' attention to the value of the community resource centre network in regional WA. In the past weeks I have attended a couple of functions in my electorate to celebrate community resource centres and the important role they play in their communities. I have risen previously to talk about these centres and I will continue to do so, because I understand the valuable role they play in my electorate and right throughout regional Western Australia.

I want to touch on a few things that the community resource centres provide, just to inform those members of the house who may not be overly familiar with them. If members visit the website for the CRC network, they will see that it explains that across a network of over 100 centres people can email, publish a newsletter or a local paper or participate in a videoconference. They can access information on government services. They can enhance their job skills or do a professional development course. They can start their own business or do their online banking—or banking in person in some cases. They can enrol in a degree or do a TAFE course, or they can download and print their digital photos. They are just some of the things that CRCs provide throughout the network. As I said before, there are over 100 of these centres in regional WA.

Through royalties for regions, we have significantly increased the funding available to these CRCs. I have spoken at length in this house about this, so I will not dwell on it. However, I note that a number of CRCs, or telecentres as they were in their original incarnation, were surviving in spite of government support prior to the Nationals and this state government delivering on royalties for regions. I would like to focus on two centres in particular this evening, Quairading and Nungarin. On 7 October I was in Nungarin for a number of events. The first was to present an award at the Keep Australia Beautiful Central Wheatbelt regional award ceremony, which is a bit of a mouthful to say. The second was to officially open the rebranded Nungarin Community Resource Centre. The Nungarin CRC is based in the old Australia Post office in town. The CRC has recently taken over the role of postmaster in town. When the previous owners of the post office decided to move, the CRC board identified that it would be a real loss to the community if people had to leave town to collect mail and do business that they would otherwise do at the post office. That would be quite detrimental to the community. The CRC board took on the role of postmaster in Nungarin. The other services that they provide, in a town that has a population of around 300, include providing free computer access to the government access portal. There is a computer that links everybody to all government services via their websites. Centrelink forms can be lodged. There is a big tourist information centre. Also available is internet access, photo printing and enlargements, bookkeeping services, gifts and souvenirs, educational computing courses, resume writing and videoconferencing, to name a few.

I would like to acknowledge members of the Nungarin CRC management committee, including Dave Crawford, Barbara Cruickshank, Keith Palmer, Jo Hewitt and Eleanor Ward, and the coordinators, Deborah Thompson and Bev Palmer, and chairperson, Tracy Scott, for all their hard work. The rebranding day was a very special day. It was made all the more special by the fact they had really engaged with the local community to refurbish what was essentially a really old piece of infrastructure in town. Local cabinetmaker Nicholas Malaspina designed and installed a brand-new kitchenette for the use of staff and visitors. I looked at it and thought that it would be quite nice in my apartment! It is now a focal point in the community for people to come into the centre, including passing tourists and grey nomads who go through the wildflower and heritage trails of the Wheatbelt. It is a really nice place for visitors from the town and tourists to engage with visitors and staff at the centre.

The other centre that I recently visited was the Quairading Community Resource and Cultural Arts Centre. Quairading is a really progressive town. It is a positive community comprising about 1 200 people. My memory of Quairading probably comes from growing up in Wyalkatchem and being consistently belted on the sporting field by Quairading! They seemed to be much larger than us; I have bad memories! They are a very progressive community and excel at what they do. How they excel in that field extends right throughout the community today. The project back in 2006 was started by then Quairading telecentre chairperson, Mrs Jo Hayes. The committee met with the shire to discuss moving the telecentre into a new building. Anybody who visited Quairading in recent years would know they were in a really run-down, leaky, not-fit-for-purpose building. The result of years of planning and work by the committee resulted in a \$2.5 million building delivered via state government funding from royalties for regions, Lotterywest, and Department of Regional Development and Lands co-location funding. This was leveraged against other significant contributions from the community, including funding from the Quairading rainmakers bachelors and spinsters committee, the Quairading Community Resource Centre committee, and funding from the federal government's roads to recovery program as part of the town enhancement program. The council also made a huge contribution by making its staff available to get the landscaping ready in time for the opening. It looked absolutely superb.

The finished building is a multi-purpose building that will house the Community Resource Centre, the council's environmental officers, the community development officer from the council, TAFE, accountants RSM Bird Cameron, and the Quairading Creative Arts Society. To finish off, I will read a paragraph from the address of the president of the Shire of Quairading, Councillor Darryl Richards, to about 150 people who turned up for the opening of this outstanding building they managed to pull together. According to my notes, the address stated —

Royalties for regions has been a godsend for rural and remote areas and has instilled confidence and faith into many communities and should not be underestimated nor overlooked. We acknowledge your —

He was talking to Hon Brendon Grylls —

foresight and understanding that rural communities were losing out big time to our city cousins, whilst a lot of the state's wealth is being generated from industries from outside the metropolitan areas.

The chair of the Quairading Community Resource Centre, Mrs Jo Hayes, also made an address. She gave her thankyou and said —

To Community, Friends and Family — for your fabulous letters of support during our grant writing period, your general support and enthusiasm was very encouraging and more recently your congratulations on what we have achieved. I've had several conversations of late along the lines of—"I didn't know what a Telecentre could ever do for me, but now I can't imagine Quairading not having one."

She finished her address by saying —

The Telecentre Network of WA (now Community Resource Network) is recognised internationally for best practice and with recent additional support from Royalties for Regions we are now a more united, professional network. We feel our name and logo change further reflects this also and we are very proud to splash them around wherever we can.

I offer my congratulations to everyone involved. They were both fantastic events. The centres will be a lasting legacy for the communities of Nungarin and Quairading and will serve them well into the future.