

## **SOUTH WEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARDS**

### *Statement by Minister for Small Business*

**MR J.B. D'ORAZIO (Ballajura - Minister for Small Business)** [12.22 pm]: I am pleased to inform the house that, together with the members for Bunbury and Capel, I recently had the opportunity to experience the South West Small Business Awards. These awards showcase some of the state's most innovative and outstanding small business operators. More than 330 small business owners from Harvey through to Augusta attended the gala event in Bunbury last Friday. The atmosphere in the ballroom was electrifying, with healthy rivalry between towns.

Agmaster of Collie won the coveted south west business of the year award for its innovative "no-till" seeding systems for broadacre farming. The company's narrow knife points create minimal disturbance to the soil. This concept of crop sowing is revolutionising broadacre farming across Australia. Overall category winners for the South West Small Business Awards were Moon-Haven Natural Products of Cowaramup for a business with five employees or fewer; Agmaster of Collie for a business with more than five employees but fewer than 20; United Crane Hire of Bunbury for a business with more than 20 employees but fewer than 50; and Carna Earthmoving of Waroona for a business with fewer than 100 employees.

Since 1995 the south west region has performed outstandingly in the state's Telstra Small Business Awards. Over the 10 years of the Telstra awards, the south west region has generated one-third of WA's finalists and winners. That is a significant achievement given that the region boasts fewer than eight per cent of the state's small businesses. South west businesses have also performed exceptionally well in the West Australian Regional Small Business Awards. These awards are the culmination of the series of small business awards programs that are held across the regions throughout the year.

By recognising small business success, we are acknowledging their vital contribution to employment growth, the many services they offer to the regions and the export revenue they generate for our great state. Small business offers a range of opportunities for youth, from the challenge of being self-employed to being a team member in a dynamic workplace that provides the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills. Small business operators boost the local economy, sponsor sport and community events, provide work experience to local youth and generally add to the vitality of the region. The South West Small Business Awards are conducted to recognise the excellence of local small businesses and those that are increasing their overall performance through improved management skills and practices. The popularity of this event and the attributes of the winners demonstrate the high level of small business acumen in the region. I commend to the house these exceptional Western Australian small businesses.