

JOBS — LOCAL INDUSTRIES

792. Ms D.G. D'ANNA to the Minister for Regional Development:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's continued support and development of local manufacturing in Western Australia that is providing local jobs and training opportunities.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how this government is creating ongoing opportunities for regional businesses through the delivery of state government contracts?
- (2) Can the minister advise how these opportunities will support continued growth and success for our local regional businesses?

Mr D.T. PUNCH replied:

- (1)–(2) I am delighted to answer this question. I thank the member for the question and for her strong and enduring commitment to small and medium enterprises in the Kimberley region. I had the privilege to visit that wonderful region recently to announce the latest round of the regional economic development grants, with \$592 000 in funding. One of the projects, Marine Biomedical, received a grant of \$120 000 to purchase equipment used in the production of its world-leading orthopaedic bone substitute product PearlBone, which is made from pearl shell. It is a fantastic project. We are fostering regional development that is not just transformative but also groundbreaking globally. It is an excellent example of industry diversification and an ambitious value-added program in the Kimberley region.

Another project that is very close to my heart—I know it will be very close to the heart of the member for Geraldton—is the announcement of the tender for the new \$13.7 million Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development vessel with Dongara Marine in Geraldton. I would like to outline the significance of that from a fisheries management perspective. This project will see the state government replacing the outdated patrol vessel *Walcott* with a brand new state-of-the-art 24-metre patrol vessel built in Geraldton. It will have a longer fuel range to conduct extended voyages, lower engine emissions and improved features compared with the old vessel. It will be able to conduct extended vessel voyages for up to 14 days, with accommodation and food storage for 10 people. It will have the latest navigation equipment and infrared night vision to support night-time operations. It will help in domestic fisheries compliance, marine park management, shark incident responses, marine safety, sea search and rescue, whale disentanglement and illegal foreign fishing vessel interception. Given the comments made recently by Hon Louise Kingston, it will help to protect our whales into the future. Construction will kick off this month. When completed in late 2025, it will be based in Broome, member for Kimberley. It is yet another example of how we are investing in our regions. That construction will lead to a whole range of new apprenticeships at Dongara Marine and training in the regions in shipwrighting, engineering fabrication trades, marine craft construction and boilermaking and welding. There are some fantastic training opportunities out in the regions.

This is where we differ considerably from the Liberal Party and the Nationals WA. We believe in local manufacturing on this side of the house. We believe in manufacturing in the regions. Over the past six years, we have worked tirelessly to leverage government procurement to maximise local opportunities. We have the Western Australian Jobs Act 2017 and stronger Buy Local policies, but we also have our local content adviser network, established in 2018 with the aim to drive and support new opportunities for local businesses to supply the state government and participate in major contracts.

We heard the Minister for Transport talking earlier about the great outcomes from the Bunbury Outer Ring Road. That local content network of advisers is embedded in each regional development commission. They connect local businesses to government supply opportunities in the region and enable regional businesses to be competitive in procurement processes. We have confidence in regional WA's capacity to deliver manufacturing. We believe in it. But I do not think there is a lot of confidence held by members opposite. They said that we could not build trains in Western Australia. They exported the first version of the Matagarup Bridge. What do we have down there now? We have a glowing symbol of Western Australian manufacturing in the Matagarup Bridge. We have confidence in regional and metropolitan manufacturing. Our strategies and policies are geared to maximising not only the delivery of projects locally, but also the enabling of training, enabling of local employment and enabling of people in the regions to build a career for the future.