

BUSINESS MIGRATION FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM

Statement by Minister for Small Business

MR J.B. D'ORAZIO (Ballajura - Minister for Small Business) [9.19 am]: I am pleased to inform the house that Western Australia's recent business migration exercise in the United Kingdom was a resounding success. The results of the state's participation in the Emigrate 2005 expo, Australian migration information day and related events reconfirmed Western Australia's status as the most popular destination for UK business and skilled migrants. An article in *The Australian* referred to Western Australia as the state with the most active migrant-hunting operation in London, and it is a well-deserved title. Western Australia boasted the most eye-catching stand at the Emigrate 2005 expo this month and that contributed to the strong interest from the crowd of more than 20 000, who were keen to learn more about business migration opportunities. Small Business Development Corporation staff also presented a networking function for local, international and interstate migration agents and a seminar for prospective business migrants, and conducted one-on-one appointments for prequalified UK clients at the Western Australian European office in London.

The response to WA's participation in the inaugural Australian migration information day was overwhelming. Registrations had to be suspended at 1 700 to manage the number of participants. The information day contact hours were extended until 8.00 pm and more than 1 000 potential UK business and skilled migrants participated in the event. At this stage, investment details have been obtained from 63 qualifying prospective business migrants identified during the UK visit and committed to relocating to WA. These details indicate that more than \$89 million in new capital may be transferred to the state in the next 12 to 24 months. The business assessment of these migrants also highlights that they will create more than 150 new jobs in the state.

The type of business proposals received at the Australian migration information day varied from architecture, accommodation, communications, catering, exporting and farming through to hospitality, manufacturing, printing, retailing, scaffolding and training. In addition, 51 migrants completed assessments and qualified for a skilled migration visa to relocate to Western Australia. Those migrants will not only help ease the skills shortage in the state; it is estimated they will inject a further \$10.2 million - an average of \$200 000 per migrant family - in new capital into the state. Occupations on the completed assessment forms ranged from bricklayers to chefs, engineers, nurses, toolmakers and welders. There is also the potential for a further 78 prospective business and skilled migrants to relocate to Western Australia as a result of WA's participation in the recent UK events. Assessments completed during the UK visit have again shown the significance of this market in attracting business and skilled migrants to Western Australia.