

REGIONAL CONTRACTS — TENDERING

426. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:

I refer to the recently announced stage 1 works at Geraldton hospital, the contract for firefighting appliances to be manufactured in Collie, the Esperance TAFE rebuild, the design of the Hedland Senior High School and the contract for the Kalgoorlie Renal Hostel, each of which should have provided a massive jobs boost to local communities. Why has the government awarded these to Perth-based or interstate businesses, overlooking local businesses and local jobs?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

We have tender processes and the tender processes under the Western Australian Jobs Act ensure that there is a focus on local content. Often we find that the businesses that win those tender processes, in fact under the law, are required to demonstrate how much local content is part of the actual contract. As part of the contracting arrangements, the local content component is written into the contract. What we find with some projects—I am pleased that the member was able to outline some of those wonderful projects this government is doing around regional Western Australia—is that local businesses are a large part of the work undertaken. I was in Geraldton recently. We are doing a \$73.5 million upgrade to Geraldton hospital—a wonderful project. The first part of the tender, as I recall, went to an earthmoving company that demonstrated the highest levels of local content. That was about an \$8 million component and it demonstrated the highest levels of local content.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Leader of the Nationals WA can interject. I am explaining what took place. A Western Australian company actually subcontracted the highest amount of local content and is setting up its office in Geraldton as part of that. Other bidders had lower levels of local content. I cannot win with the Nationals WA. As the Leader of the Nationals WA outlined, we are doing all these marvellous projects all over regional Western Australia—in Esperance, Hedland, Geraldton, Collie and other communities all over the state—ensuring that we have under the jobs act the maximum amount of local content —

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party!

Mr M. McGOWAN: What was that one?

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr M. McGOWAN: What was that one about Collie?

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party, I call you to order for the second time.

Mr M. McGOWAN: We are creating a new industry in Collie with —

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party! I call you to order for the third time.

Mr M. McGOWAN: — one of the best firefighting appliance manufacturing firms in the entire country relocating a large part of its operations to Collie, and the member is complaining! That Western Australia company is going to do far more work there than it currently does, and it won an independent tender process. As a result, it is moving its operations to Collie. It is going to become a maintenance centre for the region and because of the scale and ability of this company, the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions or other government organisations will be able to do work in Collie that they were not able to do before. That is what we have done in Collie and the member is whingeing about it; it is extraordinary! If I was not seeing it with my own eyes, I would not believe it was happening!

Never has more effort been put into diversifying the Collie economy than now, regardless of whether it involves firefighting appliance manufacturing; components of bushfire training and the like; the trails project; the giant mural on the Wellington Dam wall, which I am looking forward to seeing; or the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety's call centre being moved to Collie. All these things will diversify the Collie economy and make it stronger for the future. I can guarantee members this: there will be a lot more. I might add that in the case of Collie, I have had questions from the National Party that attack us for moving work to Collie.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I do not want the member to answer. I can look at her, but maybe I should not. The member for Warren–Blackwood has attacked me before for trying to get jobs into Collie—remember that? He stood in this house and attacked me for it. I note with the current state opposition that it is very difficult to win.

Dr A.D. Buti: Who is the National Party candidate for Collie?

The SPEAKER: It is certainly not you, member for Armadale. I call you to order for the first time.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: I thought I heard a noise coming from outside the chamber, but I will still call you to order. I call the member for Armadale. Leader of the National Party, you are on three.