

WEST AUSTRALIAN REGIONAL SMALL BUSINESS AWARDS

Statement by Minister for Small Business

MR J.B. D'ORAZIO (Ballajura - Minister for Small Business) [2.06 pm]: I am pleased to inform the house that I recently had my first opportunity to experience the West Australian Regional Small Business Awards. More than 250 representatives from the small business community attended a gala function at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre on Friday night, which was hosted by the Small Business Development Corporation. The awards showcased some of the state's most innovative and outstanding small business operators.

Collie business Agmaster added to its string of business awards by being named the 2005 Australia Post West Australian Regional Small Business of the Year for its innovative and revolutionary "no-till" seeding system for broadacre farming. Five category awards were also presented to outstanding small businesses from regional Western Australia. The Kimberley region featured strongly at this year's awards with three category winners, including Broome and the Kimberley Holidays in the business with five to 10 employees category; Broome Sightseeing Tours in the home-based business category; and Kimberley Boab Kreations in the business enterprise centre achiever category. Other category winners were Humfrey Land Developments from Geraldton in the microbusiness category, and Agmaster in the business with 10 to 20 employees category.

More than 400 small businesses participated in the regional small business award programs, which are coordinated by local chambers of commerce, business enterprise centres and the SBDC. Forty regional businesses were successful in making it through to the state finals. I applaud the outstanding quality of the small businesses that were nominated for these awards. These businesses can take their place alongside other leading examples of small business excellence throughout Australia.

I am also pleased to advise that Ms Esther Roadnight from the goldfields region was recognised as a significant contributor to regional small business and was inducted into the Regional Small Business Hall of Fame. Ms Roadnight has shown the way for many small business operators by leading by example, playing a vital advisory role and helping regional small businesses build as a community.

By recognising small business success through the West Australian Regional Small Business Awards, we acknowledge small businesses for their vital contribution to employment growth, the many services they offer to the regions and the export revenue they generate for our great state. The awards also recognise the small businesses 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 regional Western Australia. I commend these exceptional Western Australian small businesses to the house.