

PEEL REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Grievance

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah) [9.05 am]: My grievance is to the Minister for Peel and the South West, who is also Minister for Tourism; Small Business; and Sport and Recreation. I will focus on the reported comments of the Leader of the Opposition regarding the future of development commissions should a Liberal Government win the next state election. The Leader of the Opposition's comments in a local government forum in Pinjarra earlier this year and at other local government forums indicated that a Liberal Government would abolish regional development commissions if it were successful at the next election. Only recently, a number of local community members reported to me their grave concern about the Leader of the Opposition's comments on this important issue. I place on record my support for the Peel Development Commission and the work it does in my community. The commission was established by the previous Labor Government in the early 1990s to assist in the facilitation of development in one of the fastest growing regions of Australia. In just on 10 years, the achievements of the Peel Development Commission are numerous. In its early years, the commission had a strong economic focus and was responsible for a range of initiatives, including the development of a broader economic base for Peel communities. Numerous actions, projects, studies, initiatives and programs have been facilitated and incubated by the commission since its establishment. In more recent years, because of the many social, environmental, cultural and economic issues and challenges that impact on the communities in the Peel region, the commission has refocused its core business on the triple bottom line aimed at developing, building and nurturing a sustainable Peel community.

In the past decade, the State's youngest regional development commission has had resounding successes in a range of important initiatives and has played a very important role in the region's development. The commission has played a critical role in ensuring that the five local government authorities that comprise the Peel region - Mandurah, Boddington, Serpentine-Jarrahdale, Murray and Waroona - have developed a working relationship to encourage development in the region. This culminated in the establishment of the Peel economic development unit, an initiative that has led to an officer being actively engaged in encouraging existing businesses to expand and the establishment of new businesses. Key infrastructure projects, plans and opportunities would not exist without the Peel Development Commission model. It has played a pivotal role in ensuring that the needs of Mandurah and my region are understood by governments of all levels and that clear plans are established for the future planning and development of the region.

The commission's annual reports highlight hundreds of projects and initiatives over the past decade. I could list many of them and highlight the tremendous value of those projects to the region's development. However, I do not have time to do that this morning. I will therefore highlight three key initiatives that underpin the importance of the Peel Development Commission to my electorate of Mandurah and the Peel region. Of course, one is the establishment of the Mandurah Ocean Marina, which was facilitated by the Peel Development Commission. It played a critical role in ensuring that that project got off the ground. That multimillion dollar infrastructure project is of critical importance to the region and will bring economic benefits to the community for many years to come. The creation of the collocated Peel education campus and the attraction of Murdoch University to the Peel region were initiated, supported and facilitated by the Peel Development Commission. Again, the critical role that the commission played in facilitating the establishment of that collocation model means that investment in education has been underpinned. I have been actively involved as the chairman of the steering group that has been guiding the development of the Peel 2020 sustainability plan, which was facilitated by the Peel Development Commission. That plan will act as the blueprint for the region for the next two decades. It was conceived and developed through active community participation, including key sectors of business, industry, local government, government departments and individuals. The Peel 2020 process is an important process for our region. It is an excellent model of collaboration, consultation and evaluation that actively involves a range of Peel community stakeholders working together. The Peel Development Commission has played and will continue to play a critical role in this important process, which will underpin the future of our region and guide us into the next two decades. Given that the regional commission model has worked so well and has played such a critical role in the development of the Peel, why would the Leader of the Opposition want to abolish it? Why are the members for Murray-Wellington and Dawesville not standing up for the Peel region and asking their leader to understand how important the Peel Development Commission is and has been in the development of our community? I congratulate and express my support for the officers who work and have worked at the Peel Development Commission over the past 10 years. I congratulate the tremendous contribution that the board members and current and past chairpersons, including John Collett, have played in guiding the work of the commission over the past decade. I acknowledge the support of the numerous community organisations, groups and individuals throughout the Peel region that have actively participated in and supported the work of the commission over the past 10 years. I am disturbed by the comments that the Leader of the Opposition has made about development commissions over the past few months. I would like the minister to give my community and

me his assurance that the excellent work of the Peel Development Commission will continue under a Labor Government.

MR R.C. KUCERA (Yokine - Minister for Peel and the South West) [9.14 am]: I thank the member for Mandurah for his grievance. Indeed I deeply share the member's concern about the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition on the future of development commissions. I am very disturbed by these comments because they also reflect the comments that have been made by the federal member for O'Connor, Wilson Tuckey, and the federal member for Forrest, Geoff Prosser. I would be very concerned if I heard the same comments coming, for instance, from the members for Mitchell and Vasse. It is a great shame that the member for Dawesville is not here this morning to hear the member for Mandurah's grievance because I would be asking him if he shares the views of his leader. There is no doubt that his comments are designed - this is a hallmark of the current Opposition - as a definite attempt to undermine the valuable contribution that is made by development commissions throughout this State.

Mr B.K. Masters: Will you take an interjection?

Mr R.C. KUCERA: I will take an interjection when I am ready.

There is no doubt that those comments are trying to create and emphasise division between the local government organisations that have come together so well in the Peel and South West by putting politics to one side. I also take on board the member for Mandurah's comment that the members of the boards of the development commissions - I know that the Speaker has a great deal to do with the development commissions in his area - are drawn from all sides of the political spectrum and from all parts of the community and local government and that they are very supportive of their areas. I have no doubt at all that many of the excellent projects that have got off the ground with the member for Mandurah's help in the Peel area would never have got off the ground had it not been for the terrific efforts of people like Maree De Lacey and the boards that are led at the moment by people like John Collett. There is no doubt at all about that. I will refer to those in a moment.

When we came to Government - Mr Speaker, you would be aware of this - we set out to ensure that the regions have a voice and that they receive support. We have done that by appointing ministers for each of the regions. I am very proud to represent the Peel and the South West, which are very dynamic regions. In addition, we have supported the development commissions to ensure that they get on with their jobs. Last year when the Leader of the Opposition was asked whether he had ever worked in the country, I clearly recall that he replied that he had at one stage when he was in England. I suggest he move outside the metropolitan area or perhaps -

Mr D.F. Barron-Sullivan: Half of the Liberal Party represents people in regional areas.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: I am glad the member for Mitchell has voiced his opinion. Does he support his leader in abolishing the development commissions?

Mr D.F. Barron-Sullivan: Half of the Liberal Party members come from country areas of Western Australia.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: I ask the member for Vasse, who invited an interjection, does he believe that development commissions should be abolished? Does he believe that the development commission in his area, which is led by a great board, should be abolished?

Mr B.K. Masters: I believe that the South West Development Commission should start to do something for my electorate.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: The member for Vasse thinks it should be abolished. I also note that the member for Mitchell refuses to say whether he wants to abolish the development commission in his area.

Mr B.K. Masters interjected.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: The member for Vasse was allowed an interjection.

We established a cabinet standing committee on regional policy to support the commission, which was led by the Premier. That is the level at which this Government views our regions. We also established a \$75 million regional investment fund and the development commissions worked very strongly on that.

Mr B.K. Masters interjected.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: I will answer the member for Vasse's interjection. In Peel alone the RIF has already spent \$2 million developing projects and another \$400 000 is earmarked for the next 12 months. In fact, that money will be allocated later this month.

I refer specifically to the Peel Development Commission. I appreciate the work of the member for Mandurah. The Peel region has Western Australia's fastest growing population and it is the fastest growing development area in this State. As the member for Mandurah stated, there are hundreds of examples of projects in which the commission is involved. I will highlight a couple of key projects from my portfolio. An amount of \$1.2 million

has been spent on the development of the Fairbridge Village in Pinjarra. That is not only a magnificent project; it also means jobs. That project is in a Liberal seat - politics has not been involved - and yet the Liberal Party wants to abolish regional development commissions. Again, it is siding with Hon Wilson Tuckey, one of the most destructive federal members this State has seen in terms of his attitude towards this State. Wilson Tuckey wants to do nothing but divide. Approximately \$2.27 million was spent on the Peel region tourist railway project. Money has also been spent on interactive railway heritage centres and education and training facilities. All down the line that means jobs, jobs, jobs, which is what the member for Mandurah has so magnificently supported. That is our vision for the future. Last Friday in Mandurah I was able to see the Peel Development Commission in action. I was very impressed by the attitude of Sir Charles Court who attended that evening and the great support he gave the commission and the work it is doing in the area. I was also impressed by the support he gave the vision that is being shown by leaders of both sides of the political spectrum in the Peel area and, more importantly, by its business and local government leaders. For those people who take an interest in their region, while I am a member of this Government, I totally support development commissions. This Government will support development commissions because they are about vision, the future and jobs for our young people. I thank the member for Mandurah for raising this grievance.