

HOUSING — REMOTE ESSENTIAL AND MUNICIPAL SERVICE PROGRAMS

526. Ms J. FARRER to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the McGowan government's commitment to improving services in remote Aboriginal communities across the Kimberley and concerns about how essential services have been delivered in the past. How will the upcoming tender for the remote essential and municipal service programs address some of these concerns?

Mr P.C. TINLEY replied:

I thank the member for the question and her undying support for her region, her people and this state, on her seventieth birthday. At 70 years of age she is still punching away for the betterment of her own people and the benefit of her constituents, which deserves the admiration of us all.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I thank her for the question.

For the benefit of members who might not recall, there are about 274 registered remote communities in Western Australia of which, 165 are supported by the government through the Department for Communities or Housing as the lead. We do that through the remote essential and municipal services arrangements, which is a commitment by the McGowan government of \$244 million over the forward estimates. That tender is the REMS tender, which is now up for retendering for the 2018–19 to 2020–21 period. It represents a great opportunity to deliver jobs to the regions, which the McGowan government has been significantly responsible for in supporting the regions. As the principal party of the regions, the Labor Party takes seriously its responsibility to ensure that we can deliver to the communities. It is also in conjunction with another commitment that was made to divest the Aboriginal Lands Trust estate to the Indigenous people—the first people of Western Australia—to allow them to have the economic freedom to determine their own future and support their own ambitions and vision. The REMS tender will address these concerns and focus clearly on delineating the quality of the service, the municipal services, power, house fuels and setting objective standards, particularly around the relationship with employment.

It is the intention of at least two of the tenderers to be able to provide 60 direct jobs to Aboriginal people and a further target of 20 per cent Aboriginal employment over those forward estimates and a growing number to ensure that Aboriginal people get the benefit of taxpayers' money going into those communities.

Additional to this, the essential municipal services upgrade program is a \$152 million commitment made by, and on the urging of the member for Pilbara and the member for Kimberley, the McGowan government during the election campaign to improve essential municipal and housing services in remote communities. That is a very difficult undertaking given the logistics of it. This will focus initially on 10 communities in the regions to see that we get the appropriate outcomes that they need. In the first round of these objectives in the Kimberley the communities are: Arydaloon, Bayulu, Beagle Bay, Bidyadanga, Djarindjin, Lombadina, Mowanjum and Warmun. The two Pilbara communities are: Yandeyarra and Wakathuni. We look forward to seeing good local outcomes and employment in those areas. I thank the member.