

CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

372. Ms M.M. QUIRK to the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests:

I apologise. I have to accuse myself of being slow!

I refer to this Labor government's support for culturally and linguistically diverse communities across Western Australia. Can the minister outline to the house how the recently established \$6 million community capital works fund will further support CALD communities and associations?

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

I thank the member for her question and her interest in this area. The community capital works fund is an example of the Cook Labor government's commitment to multiculturalism and supporting our culturally and linguistically diverse community associations to upgrade, maintain and diversify community infrastructure. The fund was originally created in 2020 as part of our COVID-19 recovery plan and the community capital works fund contributed to keeping the WA economy strong through this period by maintaining important social and physical infrastructure. We have now committed a further \$6 million over the next two financial years—\$3 million in each financial year—to this important program. The 28 previously funded projects under this program provided a number of important community association infrastructure facilities and created immediate business and employment opportunities. The fund was greatly welcomed by our culturally and linguistically diverse community associations and they stressed the need for this fund to be continued if possible. We have listened to that advocacy by the community and we are really proud that we have been able to keep the program going.

Facilities that are owned and operated by our CALD community associations are crucial community hubs where people come together to celebrate their culture, develop social connections and foster a sense of belonging. Some examples of the projects that have already been funded include \$155 000 for the upgrade of the Cambodian Welfare and Cultural Centre of WA community hall, \$160 000 for the renovation of Croatian House in Gwelup and \$175 000 for upgrades to the Tuscany club in Balcatta.

Cultural diversity is very important to our social fabric in Western Australia and the Cook Labor government recognises the quality of our community by having a rich, diverse cultural mix. We understand the importance of our CALD communities to our society. Unfortunately, our commitment to and our views on culturally and linguistically diverse communities is not shared by the opposition. It gave only a paltry five minutes to questions on this portfolio during the budget estimates hearing. Three questions were asked in those five minutes—one question was from the member for Roe based on his lack of understanding of the difference between the spending changes and the total amount; one question was about how much the satisfaction survey cost; and one question was asked, with about 30 seconds to go, about the community grants that we are talking about today. So I am very pleased that I have been able to expand on this great program. At least the member for Roe asked a question. The member for Central Wheatbelt did not ask any questions and the member for Cottesloe ran out of the room. He was not even interested.

It is really interesting that the 2021 census shows that in the electorate of Central Wheatbelt, 14.5 per cent of constituents were born outside of Australia, 5.3 per cent come from countries where English is not the main language and 4.5 per cent speak a language other than English at home. In the electorate of Cottesloe, 29.1 per cent of residents were born outside of Australia, at least 13 per cent were born in countries where English is not the main language and 11.2 per cent speak a language other than English at home. In the member for Roe's electorate, 14.4 per cent of residents were born outside of Australia, at least 5.7 per cent were born in countries where English is not the main language and 6.9 per cent speak a language other than English at home.

Despite the lack of diversity on the opposition benches and the lack of interest in multiculturalism, we on this side value very much our culturally and linguistically diverse communities. We are proud to continue this very important fund. It is a shame and it marks the lack of interest in this area by members opposite that they allowed only five minutes in budget estimates to talk about this portfolio.