

REGIONAL ARTS AND CULTURE INVESTMENT PROGRAM

544. Mr D.T. PUNCH to the Minister for Culture and the Arts:

I refer to the strong financial management of the McGowan Labor government, which means more funding for job-creating cultural infrastructure across regional WA. Can the minister advise the house how the \$20 million regional arts and culture investment program will help drive regional jobs with our creative industries and help support the local economies of regional WA?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

I am very keen to answer that question. I thank the member for Bunbury for his ongoing support of the creative industries in the south west. He is a leader in the promotion of the importance of cultural industries.

I am very proud that in the budget that was handed down in May this year, we were able to deliver an almost \$20 million commitment over the next four years for arts throughout the regions. There is no doubt that regional Western Australia is a wonderful recipient and a wonderful container of so many creative people. Regional Western Australia has produced some outstanding creative people in the history of our state, including the very city I come from, the regional City of Mandurah. I welcome the students who were here. They have obviously left; they saw me!

It is very important to recognise the tremendous creative talent that has been delivered to the international and national stages by some very, very creative people in all the regions of Western Australia.

The regional fund that we announced will deliver three key streams. The first stream specifically focuses on regional arts investment, particularly supporting regional performing arts and cultural centres throughout the state. Member for Pilbara, there is a new centre in the Pilbara, and member for Bunbury, there is the Bunbury Regional Entertainment Centre, as well as the Mandurah Performing Arts Centre, the Goldfields Arts Centre and others. The first stream will help activate those regional performing arts venues by improving their ability to present high-quality performances, including touring performances, and support training and business development. This is very important because we want to keep training young people who are coming through who have an interest in the arts at their local venues. That is going to be an important focus.

The second stream will be of particular interest to the member for Kimberley, who gave a grievance to me earlier this year, and the member for Pilbara because it focuses on Aboriginal arts centres. We have a massive opportunity to enhance the capability and capacity of Aboriginal arts centres throughout Western Australia, particularly the many that are in the electorates of the members for Pilbara and Kimberley. This is a fantastic opportunity to not only deliver benefits back to the creative talent themselves, the people who create the art, but also enhance tourism opportunities in the regions. It is a very, very important investment in Aboriginal arts centres. I am very proud that we will be focusing on that in stream 2.

Stream 3 is about empowered and employed communities. It is focused on aligning creative programs in local government planning and supporting local government to enhance its role in providing jobs and opportunities within the culture and arts sphere. Local governments play an important role and we will support them with cultural planning opportunities and support and accessibility to employment opportunities in local communities. This stream will also include a fund to grow cultural tourism through regional festivals. The regions are one of the magnificent jewels of Western Australian culture and the arts, and we need to enhance them. This government is doing that. This comes on top of the \$8 million boost to support regional galleries, as well as our contemporary music fund, which will invest in and support contemporary music. This is a record investment in regional Western Australian culture and the arts, and I am very proud that a McGowan government initiative is delivering to the regions, recognising that the creative industries are in fact among the leaders in new growth and job development in a modern economy. This government understands that and is delivering.