

Division 25: South West Development Commission, \$20 606 000 —

Mr M.W. Sutherland, Chairman.

Mr B.J. Grylls, Minister for Regional Development.

Mr G.J. Baesjou, Acting Chief Executive Officer.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Collie-Preston.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I refer to the major policy decisions on page 311. It is notable that the major project for Lake Kepwari is not included on any of the pages dealing with the South West Development Commission, along with the motor sports upgrade. I am putting them all together because of the time factor. Also, there is no mention of any assistance under the royalties for regions program or from the South West Development Commission for the much-needed upgrade of Coalfields Highway.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: I am happy for Mr Baesjou to answer that question about those three specific projects that the member has asked about.

Mr G.J. Baesjou: We are currently working through an environmental survey on Lake Kepwari and finalising the land tenure agreement so that we can go to tender to commence the works on stage 1 of Lake Kepwari. With the motorplex, we are working with the Collie motorplex committee. We have not received any specific requests for funding from the committee. I am not aware of whether there has been any approved application under the regional grants scheme at this stage.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: This question is related to the previous question. I refer to page 312, which states that the volume of grants distributed to the community is expected to increase during 2009-10. How much is that increase expected to be?

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: Last year's funding round was \$40 million shared between the nine development commissions, so that is \$4.4 million each. This year, \$63 million is to be shared between the nine development commissions, so that is an amount of \$7 million each, probably over two funding rounds.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: The money for the Busselton jetty—that is, for the refurbishment and shore revitalisation—has been taken from LandCorp and put into the South West Development Commission. What was the rationale for that?

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: It is my understanding that the development commission is managing that project. It is a bit like the money for the Albany entertainment centre, which is in the budget for the Great Southern Development Commission.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: Is that an organisation that has the skill sets necessary to do that sort of work?

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: The development commission?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: Yes.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: I think it is overseeing the project, just as the Great Southern Development Commission is overseeing the Albany project, which was put in place by the previous government.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: I do not think that is right. It was not under the development commission under our government. It has been changed. Can the minister explain why it has been changed? It was with LandCorp and it has now gone to the development commission.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: My understanding is that that commitment of \$24 million for the Busselton jetty was made to the development commission and that it is, in conjunction with the shire, managing that project. That is why the money appears in its budget.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I refer to the second dot point on page 312, which starts with "A new relationship with Community Resource Centres". What are the criteria and what expenditure caps will be placed on those new resource centres?

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: We have a funding allocation of, I think—without flicking back—\$11 million this year for an increase in funding to the 103 telecentres across the state. We are morphing those into community resource centres. The decision has been made to link them closely with the functions and the roles of the development commissions. A development commission takes a strategic view across the region, but still needs to perform its functions in individual communities. We basically see the telecentres growing into the local branch of the development commission, but maintaining their autonomy. It will create a link that has not existed previously. We currently have a working group looking at the best way to do that. It will report to me at the end of the month. We see it as a unique opportunity to link the shopfront of the telecentre in each community back to the development commission. We are also working closely with the small business centres. Obviously, the small

business centres have had a person who is focused on a region but who does not really have an office. We want those people to use the telecentres as the office for their service delivery into each community, which is what we did in Harvey after the problems at Harvey Beef.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: After the minister listened, yes. The concerns are that those telecentres will all be rolled back into a regional centre and may be open for half a day one day a week. That is a huge concern. Another concern is whether there will be any job losses under this program.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: Quite to the contrary, member. The reason these centres were open for only half a day a week was that their funding of \$20 000 a year was never increased in the eight years that Labor was in government. We have now increased their operational funding. We have given them some new grant funding for equipment. We are determined to beef up the role of the telecentres. The operational funding will allow them to open from nine to five, Monday to Friday. They can still seek outside work to bring in more revenue. There will be no job losses. I suggest that there will be job creation. We see this as the ability to decentralise the functions of the development commissions, which are invariably located in the big towns. There is an opportunity to divide those functions. Therefore, I think the member can rest assured that after eight years of not too much happening with the telecentres, there is a real focus on growing their role as government service delivery agencies in each of the 103 communities in which they currently exist.

The appropriation was recommended.