

EMPLOYMENT, REGIONAL AREAS

**866. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Premier:**

Can the Premier advise the House of the State Government's latest initiative to boost employment in regional Western Australia?

**Dr G.I. GALLOP replied:**

We are very proud of the fact that Western Australia is a distinctive State within our nation. We are distinctive because we comprise just 10 per cent of the population but are responsible for 27 per cent of exports. We are distinctive because we do not have poker machines throughout our communities. Our lifestyle and the way we do things are also distinctive, and the trading hours rules, for which we will get the support of this Parliament, will protect that. We are also distinctive because we have the lowest rate of unemployment in Australia. We want to make sure that all the jobs generated in Australia today - most of which come to Western Australia - are in our regions.

This morning I had the pleasure of announcing a state support package of \$1.8 million for Synergy Pty Ltd to create 290 new jobs. Of those, 50 will be based in Collie, 120 will be in Bunbury and 120 will be in Albany. That will result in the expenditure of \$40 million in wages in those rural and regional communities over the five years of our relationship with Synergy. Those on this side of the House do not just talk the rhetoric of the regions; we perform. Members like the members for Collie, Albany and Bunbury are on the job. They know that call centres offer good jobs and provide employment in rural and regional communities. We have supported them -

Mr C.J. Barnett: You should talk to Ziggy at Telstra about call centres. You need to understand the technology of communications and how it affects call centres.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: Let it be recorded that the Leader of the Opposition did not join us in applauding the new investment in Albany, Collie and Bunbury. I congratulate the three local members for what they are doing to promote their communities.