

TAFE — CAMPUS UPGRADES — REGIONS

656. Ms A.E. KENT to the Minister for Training:

I refer to the delivery of a record \$243.3 million investment in TAFE upgrades across Western Australia by the Cook Labor government.

- (1) Can the minister outline how this government's expansion of the Muresk Institute in Northam will help build a pipeline of skilled workers in WA's agricultural industry?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this expansion builds on this government's other commitments at TAFEs in regional Western Australia?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

- (1)–(2) I am very pleased to be able to answer this question because, when we look overall at our investment in vocational training, including our investment in infrastructure in TAFE colleges, it speaks volumes about the commitment of the Cook Labor government to make sure that local people are skilled and able to take on the jobs that we know are out there. Work is particularly strong in the regions, and I am very proud of that. I know that so many regional government members here in this chamber and in the other chamber are representing regional areas and working very hard to respond to the needs of those regional communities.

On infrastructure alone, the Cook Labor government is delivering nearly one-quarter of \$1 billion in capital upgrades to TAFEs, and more than half of those upgrades to 15 campuses are in regional Western Australia. It is really pleasing to see.

In the just over nine months that I have been the Minister for Training, I have been very busy. I have been able to not only conclude this infrastructure—I do not know what the previous minister was doing because I have been able to do all this work in just nine months! We have been able to open world-class facilities in TAFE colleges in Broome, Roebourne, Kununurra, Geraldton and Mandurah. It has been fantastic to see. The upgrades have been either in health, hospitality, tourism and a maritime training vessel in Geraldton.

On Friday, I was able to join the Premier in Northam at the Muresk Institute. We were with local member Hon Darren West to open the \$9.5 million agricultural machinery training centre at Muresk. It is part of our \$10.3-million upgrade to that facility; \$9.5 million went to the agricultural machinery training centre, and \$800 000 was spent on an industry-standard shearing shed. These are fantastic upgrades. The upgrade also delivered two state-of-the-art combine harvester simulators and a range of other agricultural machinery options that offer realistic farm experiences in a training environment. The Premier and I were able to have a go on the simulators. I do not know how the Premier went, but after having a go on that simulator, I decided that I probably need a TAFE course to improve my skills.

It was great to see. These are state of the art —

Mr R.H. Cook: I think Darren is going to hire me to work on his farm.

Ms S.F. McGURK: That is right. If politics does not work out, the Premier can go and get a job in agriculture!

It was fantastic to see not only the physical infrastructure, but also the equipment that has been delivered to Muresk. It was great to see.

What has been really significant about these upgrades is that, as with all the other upgrades that I have mentioned, they have been delivered in response to and in concert with local industry to understand what they want and how we can make sure that those upgrades are really up-to-the-minute improvements to the physical infrastructure and the training packages that go along with them. That was certainly the case with these upgrades. Muresk and Central Regional TAFE have worked closely with industry in transforming the certificate III in agricultural machinery technology to meet current industry needs. We can see that work being done for the current training, which will mean that the trade skills for mechanical, electrical and hydraulic operations, and precision equipment and braking systems will all be fit for purpose for current industry.

To top it off, local Western Australian commercial builder ACorp Construction carried out most of the construction, and another regional Western Australian company, GBSC Yurra, built the new shearing shed.

Before I finish, I would also like to acknowledge the work of the late John Henchy, who was a champion of these improvements. He called on successive governments to make these improvements to Muresk. I am really proud that the Labor government has listened to those calls and worked with Mr Henchy with the Farm Machinery and Industry Association of Western Australia and worked with him in his volunteer work. As I said, the Labor government also worked with Muresk and industry to deliver those outcomes.

It is very sad that Mr Henchy passed away on 13 September and was not able to make the opening, but a plaque will be placed near the classrooms as part of the upgrade. According to my notes, the plaque will read —

In appreciation of Mr John Henchy, Farm Machinery and Industry Association of WA, for his commitment to establishing agricultural machinery training facilities at Muresk Institute, and for championing precision agriculture and excellence in agricultural education and training in Western Australia.

Vale, John Henchy, and thank you for your advocacy.