

SHIRE OF ASHBURTON — FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Statement

HON PETER FOSTER (Mining and Pastoral) [5.32 pm]: Last Saturday night, I attended a very special celebration in Tom Price, where we celebrated 50 years of the Shire of Ashburton in its current form. I had the privilege to represent both the Minister for Local Government and the Minister for Regional Development at this event held at the Mountain View Sporting Club, and I passed on to the shire the congratulations of both ministers on its fiftieth anniversary. The event was held on Eastern Guruma country, and we were welcomed to Eastern Guruma country by traditional owner Wayne Stephens, who is known for his extensive knowledge of local country, language and culture and is also an avid woodworker who makes a lot of traditional instruments.

Also present at the event was the shire president, Councillor Kerry White; shire CEO Kenn Donohoe; representatives of Rio Tinto, Regional Development Australia Pilbara, Ashburton Aboriginal Corporation and the Nintirri Centre; councillors from the Shires of Ashburton and East Pilbara; and local business leaders. The event was well attended by community members, and we were treated to food from local food vendors and a number of carnival rides. We were entertained by local singer Tim Cross, and then we had some amazing music by The Black Sorrows, Ian Moss, who was a crowd favourite, and Tre Amici, who travelled up from Albany; they have performed in town before and were warmly welcomed back.

It has been 50 years since the shire boundary, as it is now known, was formed. It was formed in 1972 through the amalgamation of two shires—the Shire of Ashburton, based at the time around Onslow, and the Shire of Tableland, which was based around the former town site of Wittenoom. The shire was named the Shire of West Pilbara and included the towns of Tom Price, Paraburdoo and, later, Pannawonica. In 1987, the shire decided to revert its name to the Shire of Ashburton, which remains to this day. As members may know, I have a bit to say about the Shire of Ashburton in this place, for as members may recall, I am a former councillor of that shire with over nine and half years' experience. Thank you!

The Shire of Ashburton is a large shire, spanning almost 106 000 square kilometres, which is almost half the size of Victoria, and boasts some of the country's largest mines and other resource interests, pastoral leases and cattle stations. We offer some great fishing in Onslow, and we have a growing tourism industry.

We want to acknowledge and thank the traditional owners of country for both their rich culture and sharing their beautiful lands with us: the Yinhawangka people, who are from around Paraburdoo; the Banjima people, whose lands are in the Karijini National Park and the former town site of Wittenoom; the Nyiyaparli people, who are based more towards Newman; the Thalanyji people of Onslow; the Eastern Guruma people, who call the land of Tom Price home; and the Kurruma people, whose lands include Pannawonica—all of whom have lived in area known as the Shire of Ashburton for many thousands of years.

The Ashburton Road Board—the namesake of the Shire of Ashburton—was based around old Onslow, which operated from 1887 to 1961. If members ever get to Onslow, make sure to visit the town site of old Onslow to learn a bit more about the local history of that area.

The McGowan government recognises the importance of the contribution of the Shire of Ashburton to our state and continues to invest in a number of towns, including Onslow and Tom Price. Recently, we announced an additional \$3.5 million towards the Onslow marina project, and plans are continuing for stage 4 of the Manuwarra Red Dog Highway, which will connect Tom Price to Karratha, as well as works on the redeveloped Tom Price Hospital. Last week, I was pleased to announce that the Nintirri Centre was successful in securing a regional events scheme grant for next year's Karijini Experience. It will be great to see that event return, because, unfortunately, it was cancelled this year.

Our government continues to invest in the shire, and we know that the shire has a long and strong future as it continues to grow and develop, with the resource industry, of course, continuing to drive investment, with further tourism, agriculture and even energy production through hydrogen on the horizon. I am grateful for the opportunity I had to serve the Shire of Ashburton and play a role in helping shape that shire's future.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: How many years were you there?

Hon PETER FOSTER: Nine and a half years.

I am proud of my town of Tom Price, and I encourage members during the winter break to come visit us. We have lots on offer, and whilst they are in the region, they can reflect on the journey of the shire from its pioneering and agricultural past through to its resource-driven future.

The shire's 50-year celebrations continue this weekend on Saturday in Onslow, with a free family fun day at the MPC between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm and a free concert being held at Thalanyji Oval from 5.00 pm to 10.00 pm with music by Corey Colum, Midnight Jokers and The Choirboys. There will be community markets on both Saturday and

Sunday at the Onslow Visitor Centre, and the Neil and Judy Baker shell collection—named after former Onslow residents who collected those shells over a 60-year period—will also be on display if members would like to go check them out.

I want to congratulate the Shire of Ashburton for its 50-year anniversary and for the success of its anniversary event in Tom Price. I am looking forward to joining the celebrations in Onslow this coming weekend.

Before I finish, I want to acknowledge that former Senator Eric Abetz has lost his Senate seat in Tasmania. I want to acknowledge and note that he was certainly no friend of the ABC nor of the LGBTQI+ community. Thank you.