

EDUCATION — REGIONAL FUNDING

9. Ms B.J. GRYLLS to the Minister for Regional Development:

With thousands of kids around the state heading back to school recently, can the minister please update the house on the contribution royalties for regions is making to education in regional areas such as mine in the Pilbara?

Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:

I thank the member for Pilbara for the question. It is amazing how much he can forget in such a short time. To remind him of the great work that the government is doing in education in regional Western Australia, I want to highlight the fact that schools are very important to country communities; indeed, they are the heart of many country towns, so much so that the Liberal–National government has supported significant investment in regional Western Australia through the royalties for regions program and over 3 500 programs so far to try to make those regional communities better places to live, work and invest. When we look at reasons people leave regional communities or reasons they might not choose to go there, it is amazing how much education is a big factor. It is not necessarily the other pieces of infrastructure in those communities that matter but education does, and what is sometimes perceived to be a lack of quality education. That is the basis for the reasons that people may not want to live in those areas. For that reason, the Liberal–National government, through its royalties for regions program, has made significant investments in education.

It is pertinent to remind the house at this time of the year, given that our kids went back to school a couple of weeks ago, that \$100 million has been allocated to capital works programs, including \$10 million for the complete replacement of Esperance Primary School, \$10 million for a renewed performing arts centre at Broome Senior High School, \$15 million at Derby District High School, \$6 million at Hedland Senior High School, \$9.5 million at Karratha Senior High School, \$7 million at Carnarvon Community College, \$7 million at Pinjarra Senior High School and \$3 million at Collie Senior High School. The member for Collie–Preston has not missed out.

Mr M.P. Murray: You're a cheat. You're nothing but a cheat.

Withdrawal of Remark

The SPEAKER: Member for Collie–Preston, I want you to withdraw that statement.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I withdraw.

The SPEAKER: I call you to order for the first time.

Questions without Notice Resumed

The SPEAKER: Minister, can you bring this answer to a conclusion, please.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Of course, we know that the relocation of year 7s into high school is another factor that impacts upon capital works and the need for resources in regional schools. There will be \$43 million to build new classrooms to accommodate year 7s in Australind Senior High School, Broome Senior High School, Bunbury Senior High School, Margaret River Senior High School, Cape Naturaliste College, Halls Head Community College and John Willcock College in Geraldton. There will be \$2 500 each to help students who are boarding away from home; that money goes to nearly 2 500 students in regional Western Australia. There will be \$3 million to support air conditioning in orange school buses, \$1.6 million towards early literacy programs to foster a love for reading in small kids and, of course, \$800 000 for the school breakfast program, with 65 schools participating in that program to support education in regional Western Australia. With a good education, there is no limit to what children can achieve. This government is making a significant investment in regional Western Australia to support educating our kids.