

SOUTH WEST REGION, TOURISM AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES

1050. Mr MURRAY to the Minister for State Development; Tourism:

What is the State Government doing to create additional tourism and job opportunities for the south west region?

Mr BROWN replied:

A number of initiatives are being put in place. I was pleased this morning to make a joint announcement with the member for Collie about funding of some \$1.79 million over four years to establish a centre of excellence in sustainable mine lakes in Collie. This centre will involve research and development of innovative approaches to water quality issues, and initiatives to develop commercially viable approaches to using mine lakes for tourism, fish farming, tree farming and horticulture.

It is an important issue to determine how mine sites can be used once they are mined out. Those who have any knowledge of the subject will know that there has been an aversion to allowing a number of craft, particularly speed craft, to use natural waterways. If the research proves to be correct, this initiative will enable those mine pits to be turned into wonderful, significant waterways that can be used by marine craft, which cannot now use some of the natural waterways, and for a variety of aquaculture activities. This research seeks to diversify the economy, to potentially create a range of different industries, including the tourism industry, and to provide great potential benefits for the south west, and Collie in particular. It will also, of course, assist the mining industry, because the future use of open pits, particularly large open pits, is a critical issue for the mining industry. If this research turns out the way we hope it will, we shall be able to turn those open-cut mine pits in a range of areas into magnificent lakes that can be used for a variety of tourism and development purposes and the like.

I was very pleased with the announcement this morning. I acknowledge on the record the significant work that the member for Collie has done in bringing this about. Unlike members of the Opposition, the member for Collie has been working in a difficult environment but putting forward positive suggestions that will improve the State. We like to see that. If more members opposite put forward positive suggestions that would enhance development in this State, rather than knocking everything that goes on, this State would be a much better place. Finally, I congratulate the member for Collie. Once again his determination to build the State has been demonstrated today, unlike those opposite who have not struck a blow in the past 18 months, let alone had a good idea.