

Chair; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Peter Tinley; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Yaz Mubarakai; Mr Matthew Hughes; Mr
Chris Tallentire

Division 15: Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation — Services 1 and 3, Veterans Issues; Asian Engagement, \$103 766 000 —

Ms J.M. Freeman, Chair.

Mr P.C. Tinley, Minister for Veterans Issues; Asian Engagement.

Mr R. Sellers, Acting Director General.

Ms S. Spencer, Deputy Director General, Strategy and International Engagement.

Ms L. Dawson, Deputy Director General, Industry, Science and Innovation.

Ms E. Fells, Executive Director, Invest and Trade Western Australia.

Mr M. Moran, Executive Director, Defence West.

Mr P. Carden, Chief Finance Officer.

Mr R. Sansalone, Chief Financial Officer.

Mr T. Fraser, Chief of Staff, Minister for Veterans Issues; Asian Engagement.

Mr B. McShanag, Principal Policy Adviser.

Mr J. Hilton, Senior Policy Adviser.

Mrs K. Giddens, Senior Policy Adviser.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIR: This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard. The daily proof *Hansard* will be available tomorrow. The Chair will ensure that as many questions as possible are asked and that both questions and answers are short and to the point. If an adviser needs to answer from the lectern, will they please state their name prior to their answer. The estimates committee's consideration of the estimates will be restricted to discussion of those items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. Questions must be clearly related to a page number, item, program or amount in the current division. Members should give these details in preface to their question. If a division or service is the responsibility of more than one minister, a minister shall only be examined in relation to their portfolio responsibilities.

The minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee, and I ask the minister to clearly indicate what supplementary information will be provided. I will then allocate a reference number. Supplementary information should be provided to the principal clerk by Friday, 30 October 2020. I caution members that if a minister asks that a matter be put on notice, it is up to the member to lodge that through the online questions system.

I give the call to the member for Churchlands.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Thank you, Chair. I refer the minister to the last line of the spending changes table on page 204 of budget paper No 1, volume 1.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: The transfer of veterans?

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Correct. That is the line item "Transfer of the Veterans Issues Portfolio from the Department of Communities". What was the reason for transferring the portfolio of veterans issues to the Department of Communities?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Being the second minister in the history of the state to hold that portfolio, I formed the view that there were two sides to veterans' issues. One was the social support side, if you like, particularly around mental health. There were also, where relevant, some housing issues that seemed to be a persistent theme from time to time with veterans. I wanted to move it to the position where it talked about the productivity of a veteran to not only the public sector, but also the work we are doing around defence industries. Therefore, the natural thing for me to do was to move it. One of the key things under the veterans and families' strategy was to make sure that we create an attraction-retention model that talks about the productivity of a veteran and the commonwealth's invested effort into those skills and characteristics that are developed in a veteran to make them available to industry. The largest separation rate of the Navy, for example, is here in Western Australia. We do not get to retain as many of those good folk as we would like. Having a vibrant defence industry will be part of that, but also assisting other businesses in Western Australia, particularly those up and down the Terrace, to see the value of employing a veteran. We are very much moving away from that unfortunate characterisation of the wounded digger narrative: if a person has worn the uniform, they must be broken. That is just not true. We are making sure that we are moving into a positive territory in which they are actually contributing.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: How will that money be spent?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: The money that is listed there is, in large part, taken up by the provision of an FTE. That will then morph in future years into general sector spending. The money that is being spent in addition to that FTE will establish the position inside Defence West and also ensure that it is actually activating the programs from the strategy. I can get one of the advisers to tell the member about that in more detail.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: It sounds as though it is a veterans portfolio issue that is being moved across to Defence West.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Yes.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Will Defence West become the pseudo go-to for state-based veterans' issues?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Yes.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: What will the minister's role be?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: It will be just as it is for housing. I am the Minister for Housing; I have a department that provides the departmental support for it. The Minister for Asian Engagement similarly has a department that does that. In this case, JTSI will be providing support for the veterans policy issues of the state government.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: On the veterans portfolio and looking at ways to retrain and provide employment opportunities for veterans, I am interested to know if any funding has been allocated in this budget towards training opportunities or workplace participation grants or whatever it might be, to help re-engage veterans who find themselves unemployed or who want to retrain in order to seek employment?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Yes, a significant part of the strategy has been identified as providing that sort of support, obviously bridging the gap between the skills learnt in defence and making them translate into work skills. The human resources people, particularly those in the resource houses, have discovered that the big employers do not know how to handle a CV from a veteran. Quite often the skills and experience do not correlate with the job description that the veteran is applying for. The HR people have to sort out a pile of these applications and, invariably, the veteran's application does not get onto the have-another-look file. How to give the veteran an opportunity can be split into two parts. One involves translating their existing skills into a relevant skill set and, in particular, a relevant career. One of the things that we also know about veterans is that the job that they go to on separation from defence is not necessarily the career that they suddenly decide they want to go into. This is anecdotal, but a veteran who has been in the defence force for longer than 10 or 11 years may suddenly realise that the job they took up, such as mine safety or something like that, which is a natural transition, is not exactly where they wanted to go; they wanted to work in administration or in the public sector. There are a bunch of different opportunities that allow that to happen.

We have started a program called the Defence Industry Veterans Employment Scheme, which is designed to get veterans into the workforce. It allocates \$400 000 over four years to assist veterans to achieve the qualifications they require to fully contribute to and benefit the Western Australian economy. In essence, it is a gateway for recently discharged veterans, along with other groups, to access a \$18.5 million program to grow the capacity of the Western Australian workforce to participate in the growing defence industry sector. It is very much defence industry focused. We also will be dovetailing future programs into existing state and federal government initiatives around the vocational education and training system, for example, because that is one of the fastest ways to readapt somebody's skill set.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Is that gateway yet to be established? I am just thinking of the various opportunities provided through the Aboriginal career centres and other career centres that people can go to to look at opportunities for career change. Is it likely that those career centres will be expanded to also cater to veterans, or is it too early to anticipate how that will look?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: As a deliberate pathway at the moment, it has not yet been contemplated, but I should add that any eligible person can go to those centres as well. It still sits there as an available reference for a veteran, for example, and to guide a veteran as well. We do not necessarily need a deliberate program for certain things. Sometimes it is just about knowing what is out there and guiding a veteran to it, which can sometimes be very complex and confusing for somebody who has just separated from defence.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I have one further question. With respect to the interface between the FTE in the state government and defence, when individuals leave defence there is a separation of sorts. I know that the various sections of defence have their own repatriation programs. Is there any engagement in the minister's department with those different defence organisations?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Yes, absolutely there is. The defence welfare organisations fund the support inside defence. There is also the transition authority or the established arrangements inside defence that allow a veteran to transition out. There is a range of things that they do. I should add that a veteran must volunteer to go into that transition program. It is my sad experience that a number of them, depending on the age that we are talking about, just wander off. They do their discharge arrangements and just wander off and do not take full advantage of what is available.

We are working as close as we can with the three major defence bases here to make sure that they are aware of what we have so that they can assist veterans to move into those programs.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Finally, on this matter, when Anzac House opens I know that one of its key programs will be exactly this sort of program. Is it likely that the state government will look at having a partnership and funding arrangement with Anzac House, or will that function in Anzac House be funded from a federal source?

[2.10 pm]

Mr P.C. TINLEY: We have not received any request from the RSL in relation to the programs. We have assisted the RSL in capital. I have just been advised that I forgot to mention the Anzac Day trust grant program, which falls under some long-established legislation that provides \$300 000 of grant funding to approved organisations. RSL has been a recipient of that, as have other organisations responsible for assisting in veterans' employment. The thing to understand is that a lot of this is the preserve of the commonwealth. We are talking about the twilight period between separating from commonwealth support through to being a normal human again and having another life. That area is a little grey. It becomes this constellation of ex-service organisations. The established organisations such as Legacy and RSL—those 100-year-old organisations—are providing the backbone to this. A lot of these ex-service organisations and unit associations, which are the alumni of those various units, all fit into a place. My ambition in this space is to ensure that we bring those groups together a bit more. That happens across other areas; for example, there are a lot of community housing providers. The best way to get value for money for the government is by bringing them together and having a peak-body approach. Bringing together the leadership and the coordination capacity of the government and the department to do that does not necessarily translate to needing a big raft of money, but grant money is available.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: What efforts is the minister taking to synchronise with the Department of Veterans' Affairs in this space of helping veterans with work placements?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: We were going well until COVID turned up and threw things into disarray. I had a good working relationship with the department and, of course, the federal minister. We now have a circle of veterans issues ministers around the commonwealth. Every state and territory has one now. We come together routinely in a type of ministerial council set up. That was getting some momentum to do exactly what the member just said about joining up some of this stuff. For example, with veterans' concessions we are making sure that we get harmonisation where it is appropriate across the country and that information is really well understood by the veteran community. Under the DVA changes around mental health, everybody exiting defence now gets a white card. If a person has served one day in a uniform, they are entitled to mental health support, no questions asked. It is a very good and generous system. The state mental health architecture intersects with the DVA-provider models and it has a pretty good and strong tie up. However, a bit more work needs to be done. One thing that I have always said, and that I think my predecessor, Joe Francis, always said, is that we will advocate not for individual veterans, but for classes of veterans, so where they are structurally excluded or there is an issue. For example, the nuclear veterans who went to the Montebello Islands before a certain date were given gold cards. All of a sudden, the veterans on any ship that visited the Montebellos after that, regardless of the clustering of cancers, were excluded from that sort of thing. We obviously went in to bat for them and we are still going.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The funding allocation for this goes from \$131 million to \$133 million. I assume from what the minister said earlier that that is for the one FTE.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Yes.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Is one FTE enough of a resource to achieve the synchronisation that the minister is talking about and the outcomes of this portfolio?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: One of the values of moving the veterans portfolio into JTSI and Defence West is that it bands up with a team of about 17 people, half of whom are veterans themselves. As usual with these sorts of things, they flex on the extra effort depending on the task. Other bodies are also available, so we have used that. But the more direct answer to the member's question is no, we do not have enough. As the strategy starts to get momentum, we will need dedicated program managers to do that. That is an issue for consequential budgets to solve.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Does the minister have a breakdown of how the other states are going in creating their own state veterans portfolio and how they are resourcing that portfolio? Can the minister give us a sense of how the Western Australian effort compares?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I will give the member a characterisation. We are a bit off the pace compared with what is happening in places like Victoria and New South Wales. There is a rich area to work into. It is just a question of having the time in terms of the bandwidth, if you like, from a departmental point of view. More bodies is not necessarily the solution. It is just about making sure that we have structured policy breakouts. I will give the member an example. A veteran in New South Wales can go online with the equivalent of the public sector commission and

punch in their skill sets. It will then provide an equivalency in the public sector for each of those skill sets and where the veteran sits. If a person wants to work in the public sector, they can get a sense of what jobs they would contend for at whatever level. That is just a web-based response and it is an outstanding piece of kit. I have said that I want that; it just takes time to get those sorts of programs going.

Mr Y. MUBARAKAI: I draw the minister's attention to page 210 of budget paper No 2, volume 1. The first line item is about the COVID-19 disruption. Can the minister explain how his Asian engagement portfolio has responded to WA's ongoing trade and investment relationships during these times?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Sure. Thanks for the question. International trade and investment obviously is the lifeblood of our state. Forty per cent of the nation's wealth has been sliced and diced in different ways. It contributes about \$180 billion to trade in Western Australia, of which 80 per cent is with Asia. When we were in opposition, we saw that having an Asian engagement minister and that cabinet-level representation was an essential component of a future cabinet to meet the aspirations of the business community and the Western Australian community and to take advantage of our time zone. We have discovered that WA trade equals WA jobs; it really does, straight up. In Western Australia, 500 000 jobs are trade related, and a significant number of that is directly with Asia because nine out of 10 of our top trading partners are in Asia. COVID-19 has clearly disrupted that, as it did across a lot of areas. International travel alone and the cargo movements that were happening underneath the seats were interrupted significantly. Obviously the lobster industry is a very good example. It lost 95 per cent of its business. That is the hazard of having a single market. The Asian engagement portfolio itself has had to rejig and I have asked the agency to have another look at it. We have pulled back on a few programs, but we are also looking at how we can activate and continue to keep the Asian engagement strategy moving, even during COVID times. Some of the things we have been working on that are really important is the delivery of market plans for all the key Asian markets. We want to do that by the end of this year. When the starter's gun goes off, if you like, and we can resume international travel in particular, and when businesses can get out there and do the work that they do, we do not want to be caught flatfooted. We know that other states are deploying additional assets into regions, even through COVID, to make sure that they are present to what is happening in the markets. One of the things the agency has been working hard on is understanding the disruptions to internal markets. A lot of the distribution of our products are taking a straight trade approach. A lot of the distribution of our products in these markets is made up of small-to-medium enterprises that have been affected, so there is a disrupted internal supply chain inside various markets. Indonesia is a good example of that. Understanding the nature of the disruption and the fragmentation of those distribution systems is really important. Of course the other thing that we are really acutely aware of is the potential for changing consumer tastes. COVID-19 has created a set of circumstances in which people take their food safety, for example, very, very seriously. That has always been a feature of the Asian markets anyway, but never more so than now.

We think that some might be transitioning away from live and fresh food products into a frozen or some other manufactured or processed food product. That is just in the food space, but there are other areas too, so a lot is going on. From the supply side, we are making sure that the various industry sectors, the priority sectors in particular, are still active where they can be on their networks. A lot of virtual stuff is going on as well. We are also making sure that particularly the business organisations, the relevant business councils, are still connected to their networks. We can provide information to the agency to make sure that we are re-balancing the Asian engagement strategy.

[2.20 pm]

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I refer the minister to page 221 and the line item "Payment to the Anzac Day Trust". The minister made reference earlier to the \$300 000 allocated each year up until this year.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Yes.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Obviously the minister is aware of the issue around veterans' gravestones at Karrakatta Cemetery.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Yes.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I am not sure whether that issue sits in this part of the budget, but maybe the minister could give us an update on what he is doing to address the concerns of Western Australians who are really worried about the graves of those veterans who returned home from Gallipoli, for example, and then died of wounds, be it psychological wounds or whatever, in their 20s. They are entitled to an official war grave. Those war graves existed, but now the headstones have been removed and new graveyards are being put into that part of Karrakatta Cemetery. That is a real concern for some people. How is the minister addressing that issue?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Just to be clear, that is not in this part of the budget. There is no allocation and there is no direct line of responsibility for me on this particular issue. Obviously, it sits with Minister Templeman in his area of local government and heritage. He has a long history in dealing with that issue and with the health minister and the various acts that he has responsibility for such as those around crematoriums and those sorts of things. The issue, particularly at Karrakatta, is that if it had not undertaken a renewal program, that cemetery would have been closed.

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It would have closed in 2005, according to my advice. As a result, it has had to undertake a program. It always had a longstanding program on how it was going to reorientate. No grave has been exhumed. It has moved in between those various graves. There is a protocol for the headstones that it goes through whereby it tries to contact the family to understand their wishes. Beyond that, I would get into a level of detail that I am not confident I would be able to provide here.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I think this is probably the concern here, because, as the minister knows, the Department of Veterans' Affairs is a commonwealth department that manages most veterans' affairs. When the Labor state government created a veterans' portfolio, it did so with a view, I understand, to represent veterans. Therefore, it is an agency for overseeing and interacting with other departments. In that sense, this issue is a real issue. Notwithstanding the land space concerns that the cemeteries board might have, the fact is that there are obviously graveyards where official war grave headstones have been removed. I have visited the site; I am sure the minister has too. Why is the veterans' minister not looking to allocate money in the budget to assist in either exhuming those graves and moving them into the official war cemetery in close proximity to Karrakatta, or refurbishing the graves that have not yet had the drama of other graves staggered around them?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Just to make sure the member understands the point here, there is a commonwealth war graves segment, and not everybody who has a headstone with a rising sun is eligible to go there.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Correct.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: They are an elected option for families to go to a uniformed headstone that is very similar to the commonwealth war graves, and there is a uniformed one. Some families opt for it. People could be given the impression that it is an official war grave. I just want to make that distinction.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I am actually referring to the ones that come into the category of official, because the current commonwealth war graves site, as I understand it, was only created, I think, after World War II; therefore, we are dealing with these official war graves that existed prior to that. They are the ones that are currently having the headstones removed that are drawing the concern. I absolutely understand the minister's point of veterans who choose to have a headstone, but they are not in an official war grave. I am talking about the official ones that are having the headstones removed.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: There is a protocol to go through. I should say, also in reference to the member's previous question, that I absolutely do not walk away from the responsibility, tangential as it may or may not be, of making representations to relevant ministers around the treatment of veterans' war graves. The key piece here is to ensure that there is a communication with the family. That needs to be robust and exhaustive, and, as the member knows may not be fruitful because of the way families move on. Again, it is not in my immediate lane; I have seen a briefing note on it. There is going to be a review into the Cemeteries Act next year; I think it has already been instituted. Inside that review these issues will be canvassed. My views will also be represented there, of course, as will any other organisation. As the member can imagine, there are executive service office elements out there that would want to have an input to this.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The review of the Cemeteries Act will create as many submissions as the review of the Dog Act, I would suggest. Anyway, I digress. On page 205 of budget paper No 1, volume 2, at the fourth dot point there is a reference to Asian engagement. It says —

... the Department has continued to implement the Asian Engagement Strategy and has hosted a series of business forums on key Asian markets including China, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines. The Department also launched the Access Asia Business Grants Program ...

Could the minister please advise what is the value of the Access Asia business grants program, who has participated in that grants program to date and the value of the grants that have been accessed, please?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Sure.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Could the minister also provide an update on the business forums, how they were conducted, and if they were conducted with groups that are here, as in the chambers of commerce that represent those people —

Mr P.C. TINLEY: The relevant country —

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Or whether there were Zoom meetings into the countries of origin.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I am just taking some advice. To break it down to the elements that the member is speaking of is not entirely possible, but I might ask Simone to maybe make a comment around how we have expended the Access Asia grants.

Ms S. Spencer: We have run a couple of rounds of the grants. We ran a grant round late last year. A grant round was suspended earlier this year because we learnt from the first round—those still currently in it—that a lot of the grants were for them to be able to travel to Asia. We postponed the second round while we allowed some reconfiguration

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of the program. We have consolidated the second round into a third round, which we have just released, and that is very much focused on giving businesses in WA the virtual capability primarily to do that engagement, which we have found is really useful because we have run a couple of virtual trade events. I will give the member an example of one we ran recently with our sister city Zhejiang in China, where we sent the products to China. We had our office in China arrange for the beef to be cooked, the wine to be served, and the seafood to be prepared in a hotel in Zhejiang, then we had producers in Western Australia talking about the product as people in China were tasting. We find that there are varying levels of, I guess, tech savvy and resource here, so sometimes it is a mobile phone in a winery talking about how the wine was produced. We felt like it was better to target the grants this time round so that they can continue that engagement, they can develop the collateral, but to be able to have the tech savvy to be able to do it well.

[2.30 pm]

Mr P.C. TINLEY: The Leader of the Opposition had a lot of questions in there.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Yes.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Did we get anywhere close?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The only other side of it is the value of the Access Asia grants that have already been acquitted, and what has been allocated for this year with respect to the virtual grants. I could not find the line item in here—maybe it is my astigmatism.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Simone, you can give a breakdown there?

Ms S. Spencer: Generally, the grants were around the value of \$10 000 for the first round. When we awarded them, we learnt that we needed a bit more of a sliding scale, so the next round of grants will have a higher value from \$10 000 to \$20 000. I guess we are still going through the process of acquittal, because some of those that were in the first round asked for an extension because they were unable to undertake their original business case. We have acquitted, I would say, half of those grants, but we have given extensions to those who still want to be a part of the program but were unable to undertake their activities. With this next round we are hoping that we will be able to allocate more. Again, it depends on the value of the grant sought, but we have roughly around \$120 000 set aside.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: There is \$120 000 that is been set aside. What is the total value of the grants that have been allocated so far?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: As in expended?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Yes, expended.

Ms S. Spencer: I have to take that question on notice because, as I said, some of them have been suspended and not acquitted yet. I can give the member the value. Yes, I will have to take that question on notice.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: By way of supplementary information, is it possible to get the total value of the grants program, those that have been expended, those that have been expended and acquitted, and those that have been set aside, obviously because of the inability to travel or whatever it might be? I would appreciate that.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Is that easily done?

Ms S. Spencer: Yes.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Yes, I am happy to give that as supplementary.

The CHAIR: Minister, you have to outline what you understand that you are giving as a supplementary.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: We are going to give the Leader of the Opposition information on the Access Asia grants, and the Asian engagement business initiatives that have been expended to date. Help me out with the rest.

Mr M. HUGHES: The total value of the program.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: And the total value of the program. Thank you, member. Are you happy with that?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Yes, very.

[*Supplementary Information No B13.*]

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: My question relates to the Asian business councils. I refer to line item 1 on page 210. Can the minister please explain to us what support has been provided to the Asian business councils?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: The Asian business councils are quite an important part of the constellation of engagement, if you like, both here with industry, people-to-people connections and the markets. Because they are either through their own business connections or their own cultural connections, those business councils have a natural connection

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to the market in question. Making sure we engaged with them when we came to government and launched the Asian engagement strategy was fundamentally important because it is our fastest source of feedback. In fact, so much market knowledge comes from those business councils. About \$250 000 has been approved to support capacity building programs in the Asian business councils. As the member can appreciate, some of the large ones, such as the Australia China Business Council—ACBC—is well supported. The newer ones such as the Philippines and Vietnam are not as well endowed. We need to provide some support to ensure they have capacity. That was part of the 2017 election commitment, which was to provide a total of \$2 million of funding over the term of the government to support the Asian business councils.

As a result, seven Asian business councils have developed strategic plans. The Western Australia Vietnam Business Council was pivotal in the development of the state's memorandum of understanding with Ba Ria-Vung Tau in the south of Vietnam, which we signed on 16 September by virtual connection. Those are the sorts of things that we support. I recently made a keynote address to the China WA bilateral engagement business dialogue presented by the Australia China Business Council, and the leader of the opposition has been to similar ones herself and made contributions there. As part of the funding support, the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation also leased, as it was an election commitment, an office for Asian business councils, so that those smaller ones have a location in the CBD to go to and conduct their businesses from. That is been up and running since 1 January 2019. For the record and for those who are interested, that location is level 12, 197 St Georges Terrace, and it is well attended. We are learning how we can make it more relevant to those business councils, particularly the smaller ones, in the form of training and function spaces, and places to set up and do some of the work they need to do.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: The minister just mentioned the newly made relationship with the province in Vietnam of Ba Ria-Vung Tau. I want to ask him about how we have had a half-developed relationship with the province of Gyeongsangbuk-do in South Korea, but it has never really been developed by our side, or the minister's side of the government. I am just wondering whether there has been any progress on that relationship?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Unfortunately, my short answer is no. We have been focusing on the emerging markets. The three major trading partners—China, Japan and South Korea—are well catered for. The ones I have asked the agency to focus on is the emerging markets, because a diversified economy needs diversified markets. Our relationship with Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia and the Philippines are a good example of that tier of economy that is coming on and will be quite significant, making sure we have a presence in that. I am not sure whether that rings any bells for the member? No? Sorry.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Given that our three largest trading partners are China, Japan and South Korea, I think, I just would suggest that it might be good politics to treat the Koreans with the same respect that we have treated the Japanese and Chinese in having a sister province relationship with Zhejiang in China, and I cannot recall the name of the one in Japan, but it is —

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Hyogo.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: That is right, thanks. I just suggest that I think it might be a sensible thing to do.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Yes; I thank the member for his advice.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Any time.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: He is right.

The appropriation was recommended.

[2.40 pm]