

SOUTH REGIONAL TAFE — ESPERANCE CAMPUS — INFRASTRUCTURE

Grievance

DR G.G. JACOBS (Eyre) [9.19 am]: I thank the Minister for Training and Workforce Development for taking my grievance today. The subject of my grievance is the technical and further education centre in my town of Esperance. To put it in context for members, there has been a restructure of management around the TAFE. Its evolution has a long history, but the restructure now brings the Goldfields Institute of Technology, which was a previous TAFE, into South Regional TAFE.

As you would know, Madam Deputy Speaker, the previous association with Kalgoorlie underwent a restructure with the Kalgoorlie campus coming under Central Institute of Technology and my TAFE, if you like, coming under South Regional TAFE, which includes the areas of Albany, Bunbury, Busselton, Collie, Denmark, Harvey, Katanning, Manjimup and Margaret River. The true nature of my grievance is not about governance and structure; rather, it is about the origins of the Esperance TAFE campus and its infrastructure.

The Minister for Training and Workforce Development is probably aware of the origins of Esperance TAFE, but I have been in Esperance for a long, long time and I advise that it goes back to 1982. It essentially started as a night study technical division of the Department of Education. At that time, the infrastructure comprised an administration building and two lecture rooms that were not necessarily of a high standard, but essentially it had to start somewhere. In 1984 workshops were added and in 1992 a donga library—excuse the expression—two donga classrooms and a couple of rooms at the back were added. By 1996 what we see today was all in place. In 1998 it became the community college that was Curtin and community funded. In 2003 a double-storey entrance reception hall was built, which, today, is the Goldfields Institute of Technology building. In summary, for eight years it was under the technical division of the education department; for 13 or more years it morphed into Kalgoorlie Curtin College; and, for the last four or five years, it was Goldfields Institute of Technology. There has been piecemeal development and essentially a mismatch of infrastructure and buildings.

During my last tour of the Esperance TAFE site, outside the donga in which the TAFE runs a very popular and amazing course in hair and beauty, I could see timber construction and a sign that reads, “Beware—nail gun in use”. There is a lack of room at the campus and essentially the model does not cope with three trades—electrical, welding and mechanical—in the one workshop. Building construction students have to go outside and are accommodated by a dome structure. They do construction work outside the hair and beauty centre. This is in no way critical of the training provided by TAFE in Esperance, which is now South Regional TAFE, Esperance. Forty courses are available at the campus and student contact numbers over the years have increased incredibly. In 2014, there were 60 000 hours of student contact; today, there are 125 000 hours of student contact. I commend Hammond Chitate and his staff for the work they do. However, the TAFE facility is in dire need of being brought into the twenty-first century. People talk about an upgrade versus a redevelopment. Minister, this facility cannot be upgraded; we need to start again with a redevelopment. As I explained in the time line, the Esperance facility morphed when we needed it to. However, we need to be a strategic area; indeed, we are a strategic area because of our geography. A brochure that I circulated to the community asking for suggestions states that TAFE is all about providing job opportunities and making people job ready, particularly in areas such as agriculture, tourism and hospitality. There is great innovation in Esperance and that innovation is no more evident than in the technology used by Davies Wear Plate Systems, which originated in Esperance and remains in Esperance. The company uses state-of-the-art technology to put in wear plates on hoppers and crushers for the mining industry. It has become an international company.

During my time on this redevelopment campaign, I have been through four ministers. It all started with STAMP—the strategic training asset management plan. I have received over time four letters from different ministers telling me about STAMP, that they would be finishing the asset training plan and that they would be with us shortly. I invite the minister to visit Esperance to look at the facility and to do something about its redevelopment.

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Minister for Training and Workforce Development) [9.26 am]: I thank the member for Eyre for his grievance. I acknowledge that the member has made numerous representations to a number of my predecessors and me about the requirement for a new training facility at Esperance. The member for Eyre’s passion and advocacy for his community is to be commended. I appreciate his dedication to the local issues that affect his community.

The member went through the history of TAFE in Esperance. It was formerly part of Curtin University’s vocational education and training centre and was transferred to the state in about 2012. Lecturers and administrative staff at the Esperance campus have been proactively dealing with the new managing director and the administrative team to get a seamless transfer as a result of TAFE reform. They have been doing a very good job to ensure that they continue to deliver a high level of training to the students enrolled at Esperance TAFE. The member for Eyre would be aware that the population of Esperance has grown significantly over the past

30 years from 9 863 residents in the 1981 census to 13 477 residents in the 2011 census. I expect the latest census will probably show a greater increase. That population growth is evident when we look at the growth in the number of students going through TAFE in Esperance. In 2014 there were 525 course enrolments; in 2015 that number increased to 870 course enrolments. There is certainly strong growth, and that growth has come from a range of different areas. There is a very high level of communication and cooperation between Esperance TAFE and the local Esperance business community. I am advised that there are 230 apprentices and trainees in training with employers in the Shire of Esperance. The top four areas are retail carpentry and joinery, engineering tradesperson mechanical, electrical mechanics and retail management. It is good to see businesses stepping up and taking on apprentices and trainees and using the expertise of the TAFE to ensure they get that very important classroom work around their craft to complement the skills they are learning in the workplace.

I have been to the Esperance facility with the member for Eyre and I acknowledge the failings of the very tired and old campus. I was shocked to learn that the campus regularly floods when there is high rainfall in the area. I put on the record my acknowledgment for the fantastic work that the lecturing and admin staff continue to deliver at the Esperance facility to ensure that the facility does not in any way detract from the quality of training being delivered to students.

That said, as the member is aware, the Department of Training and Workforce Development put some additional funds into the Esperance campus, which were designed to put some maintenance effort into the campus to keep it ticking along until the strategic asset management plan was completed. That plan is complete and the Esperance campus sits on our schedule of works as a very high priority for upgrades or replacements. The Try-A-Trade program is being delivered for the first time this year through the Esperance campus for school-aged students. A lecturer from South Regional TAFE's Albany campus is delivering that program and Esperance Senior High School students have been given a chance at trying a variety of construction trades. They come into the campus and experience plastering, bricklaying, carpentry, joinery and plumbing, to gain a feel for those trades and determine whether they are trades that might inspire them to a future career opportunity. A lecturer from the Albany campus is travelling to deliver high-level carpentry and joinery training to apprentices at the campus and a graphic design lecturer at the Esperance campus has developed an online graphic design program that has seen students from around the whole South Regional TAFE enrol to receive that program online. A lot of initiatives are coming out of Esperance TAFE to ensure that we are keeping the skill sets of the local community current and training them into jobs that will lead to employment opportunities.

I will continue to work with the member for Eyre on this campus; I understand the need for it. I have been to the Davies Wear Plate Systems technology factory with him—that is an amazing facility, and to see that kind of innovation come out of a town such as Esperance is truly inspiring. That technology is now being exported right around the world to mining sectors in other countries and is saving the mining industry millions of dollars in lost time by enabling them to replace worn equipment parts without having to interrupt their flow of work. I will be visiting Esperance on Wednesday, 23 November and I look forward to having another look at the Esperance campus at that time. I will also spend that time listening to some of the member's constituents and meeting the lecturing staff at the campus to understand a little more about that campus's needs. I acknowledge that a replacement facility is needed there, so I will continue to work with Treasury on the asset management plan to see what we can deliver for a new campus for Esperance TAFE.