

*Bunbury Regional Parliament — Adjournment Debate*

**HON COL HOLT (South West)** [10.33 pm]: I want to report on the regional Parliament that is being held today and tomorrow in Bunbury. As a member for the South West Region, I thought I would give those members who did not manage to make the trip to Bunbury to enjoy some of our good old south west hospitality a bit of an update on what I think about the regional Parliament. I went to Bunbury yesterday, and I came back this afternoon for today's sitting of the Legislative Council. I want to congratulate the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly on his approach to this event. There was a great deal of engagement in the events that I went to in Bunbury. There was also a real focus on the educational component and on enabling the schools in that region to be able to interact with Parliament, because some of those schools may not get that opportunity when Parliament is sitting in Perth. The level of acknowledgment from the visiting parliamentarians to that region was outstanding.

A number of events were held as part of that regional Parliament. One of those events was about meeting the ministers. The purpose of that event was to give community organisations and businesses the opportunity to meet one-on-one with ministers and their teams. I sat in on one of those meetings, and the feedback was excellent. It was a great opportunity for ministers to get connected with the community, and, vice versa, for the community to get connected and understand some of the ministerial objectives and approaches to things. I also went to the community reception that was held last night. There would have been about 300 people there. It was a crowded room of interested and concerned locals who came along to make the most of the opportunity to rub shoulders with parliamentarians, including the Premier and the Treasurer. I was really impressed with the evening. The feedback I received from community members I know was very encouraging. They made the most of the opportunity, as did the parliamentarians who went there; it was an opportunity for them to know more about what was going on in the south west. I congratulate those members who took that on full bore.

There has also been a series of breakfasts. We held a breakfast this morning to which 65 guests came along. Again, the level of engagement shown by the parliamentarians there was outstanding. The interaction that occurred between those guests and the parliamentarians was fantastic. I also note that a marquee has been erected next to Bunbury Regional and Entertainment Centre that is dedicated to the whole education process. When the Speaker went to Bunbury and looked at ways of taking Parliament to the regions, that was a very big outcome for him. He has done a very good job in doing that.

I would like to encourage the Parliament to provide more opportunities to go to regional Western Australia. In my view Parliament is a little isolated in that it is held in Perth. Going to the regions provides opportunities for regional Western Australians, who we know are important components of our community, to be engaged more and to understand the parliamentary process. Congratulations, therefore, for taking the Parliament to Bunbury. I would like to think that more opportunities will occur in the future.