

*Regional Grants Scheme — Adjournment Debate*

**Hon COL HOLT:** I also want to report on an event that the Minister for Regional Development announced while he was in Bunbury, which was the next funding round for the regional grants scheme. We attended a function at Bunbury Regional Art Galleries. Members who visit Bunbury should go there and have a look at some of the fantastic paintings by a lot of local artists and a lot of local children. It is a fantastic venue. The Minister for Regional Development took the opportunity to launch the next phase of the regional grants scheme. Each of the nine regional development commissions will receive \$5 million in contestable grants. I noted in the audience that some people who were there for that launch were the recipients of previous grants. I was talking to those guys, who saw this as a fantastic opportunity for regional Western Australians to get some funds for some very important local projects. They are looking forward to the next round of regional grants and are getting together their projects and submissions to make sure they make the most of those opportunities.

I will give members a bit of background on the achievements of the first \$40 million funding round of grant schemes. In total, there were 847 applications for that funding, which was an enormous response. It probably represents a backlog of projects that communities are gathering up from their shelves and have ready to go. They saw these opportunities and decided to put those projects in to see how they went. A total of 847 applications is an outstanding number. Of those, a total of 320 projects were approved. Although they were competing for \$40 million, they attracted another \$97 million worth of leverage from other sources to complement those projects.

I will quickly mention some of the projects. In the south west there is the Munda Biddi Trail, which goes from Nannup to Albany. That trail has been developed over a number of years now and is starting to be recognised around the world as an iconic mountain-bike trail. Congratulations to those guys for putting in a submission and actually getting it funded. They are now working away to build that trail from Nannup to Albany. The south west region received 192 applications for funding from the regional grants scheme in the last round, of which 66 projects were funded. Those 66 projects, which were funded to the level of \$3.5 million, leveraged about \$20 million worth of in-kind funding. The injection of that small amount of funding has brought some projects on line that may never have gone ahead. I congratulate those involved in the first round of the regional grants scheme, and those guys who developed those projects and put in the submissions for funding; I am sure they will go full-steam ahead.

In closing, the funding round that was launched today will run until 10 February, which will allow anybody who is developing new projects a good amount of time to get their funding applications and submissions together. I am sure round 2 will be as keenly contested as round 1 was, for which 800-odd submissions were received. I congratulate the Minister for Regional Development on the continuation of the program, because I have received plenty of feedback and I know that communities throughout regional Western Australia really appreciate it. It enables them to get both infrastructure and other projects that are important to those communities off the ground and going, and it makes a difference to their lives in the regions.