

PUBLIC EDUCATION — REGIONS

676. Ms E.J. KELSBI to the Minister for Education:

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please.

Ms E.J. KELSBI: I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to support the students and teachers at schools across regional Western Australia.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please, members! The member is struggling to speak because of a cold or illness of some kind. Your interjections are making it twice as hard for her. However funny you think you are, please do not interject.

Ms E.J. KELSBI: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

- (1) Can the minister outline how the Cook Labor government is strengthening the quality of public education in regional schools?
- (2) Can the minister advise how this government continues to support teachers working at regional schools?

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

- (1)–(2) The effort the member for Warren–Blackwood put behind delivering that question is reflective of the effort she puts into education in her community. I know that she is completely committed to ensuring that students in her electorate receive first-class education. I thank her for asking the question.

This is a great story. It is a \$20 million-plus story. Last Friday, I was at Donnybrook District High School with the outstanding member for Collie–Preston, who obviously is an educationist and is also very committed to delivering education outcomes for regional students. We were there to announce that the Cook Labor government is committing an extra \$5 million each year to strengthen education and enhance student outcomes in the 51 district high schools across the state. That is on top of the boost of \$9.3 million that we provided in 2022–23. This is a \$5 million commitment per annum for the 51 district high schools. Nearly all of those are in the regions. Only on Monday, I opened the District High Schools Country Week competition at the Bendat Basketball Centre. I could see that those students were enjoying their stay in Perth. The whole idea of the \$5 million extra commitment is to ensure that regional students have the same opportunities and the same choices as students in the metropolitan area. This money can be used for schools to enhance curriculum delivery and student services and to expand the access to specialist student support services in order for students in the regions to be provided with the best possible education environment. It can also be used by the principles to free up staff so they can go on professional development courses and to secure support through the School of Isolated and Distance Education. Kevin Brady, the president of the Western Australian District High School Administrators' Association, has written to me welcoming this announcement and the additional support that the funding will provide to students in district high schools across the state.

But there is more—there is much more! The Cook Labor government today is also announcing more than \$15 million in further funding to continue the regional attraction and retention incentive. A total of 66 regional and remote schools delivering secondary education will benefit from the \$15.49 million initiative, which is up from 48 schools last year. This incentive is used to attract, recruit and retain teachers and school administrators in schools and remote areas that are hard to staff. This is a very important additional financial incentive. Eligible staff members will receive between \$5 000 and \$17 000 for working in remote and rural public schools for the 2024 school year. This is a fantastic announcement by the Cook government.

On top of the \$5 million per annum of additional funding for district high schools, we now have this continuation of the regional attraction and retention incentive funding, and we are enlarging it from 48 to 66 regional and remote schools. It does not matter where someone is educated, whether it is Broome, Halls Creek, Esperance, Albany, Collie, Denmark, York or Cunderdin—wherever—they will receive the best possible education because the Cook Labor government is committed to every student in Western Australia reaching their full potential.

The SPEAKER: Member for Roe, this will be the last question, and there will be no supplementary, given the time.