



the

EGGLESTON



report

Senator Alan Eggleston: Working for Western Australia

June 2004

Looking to the future

The Prime Minister, John Howard, is looking to the future needs of Australia.

At his 30th Anniversary Dinner in Sydney recently the Prime Minister said: "We may have a strong economy, we may have high employment, we may have a great story to tell, but the attention of the electorate must be directed towards the future and not to the past."

We want to keep the Australian economy growing strongly so that jobs are safe and people can plan for the future. An example of the Howard Government's commitment to Australia's future can be found in the newly announced AusLink. AusLink will see the Federal Government spend \$11.8 billion on Australia's land infrastructure

over the next five years. Western Australia will receive \$463 million for projects on the AusLink National Network and maintenance.

Another example can be found in the new MedicarePlus package. This will see, among other things, a new safety net introduced for all, an additional 1500 doctors, more bulk billing incentives and support for chronic conditions.



The government has a bold agenda for the next decade focussed on addressing the major issues we face as Australians. These include the ageing of the population and the need to provide jobs, other activities, accommodation and support for our seniors so that they can continue to make a contribution and live with dignity. The need to have for the first time in our history a national water resources plan is a high priority as well as combating salinity and providing for the ongoing infrastructure needs of Australia.

I strongly believe that it is vital for the future of Australia that we have a Federal Government committed to addressing the big broad policy issues which we face as a nation.

It is in the interests of all Australians that these basic critical policy areas are addressed so that our nation can realise its potential for the benefit of all Australians.

Kind regards

Alan Eggleston

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Broadband deal for Kalgoorlie-Boulder

Residents and business in Kalgoorlie-Boulder will get better deals from broadband services with help from a demand aggregation broker funded by the Australian Government.

The Federal Government has allocated \$300,000 to engage a broadband demand aggregation broker for the region. This important funding will strengthen the purchasing power of nine local government authorities in this region, including the city of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and the shires of Esperance, Wiluna, Dundas, Leonora, Laverton, Coolgardie, Menzies and Ngaanyatjarraku.

The demand aggregation broker will also raise awareness and improve understanding of the benefits of broadband services across the region.

The 25-month project will primarily be targeted at the mining industries, tourism, local government authorities, Australian and West Australian departments and small businesses operating in the region. Broadband services will be particularly useful for allowing effective and efficient communication of data by mine sites, which are often located a long way from town and need to communicate with Perth and other national and international destinations. Broadband access in the region will also have the



Alan at the 4th birthday of Telstra Country Wide in Kalgoorlie with Telstra Country Wide western region manager Geoff Booth and Communications Minister Daryl Williams

potential to attract and retain staff in a wide range of professional and government sectors. The announcement was made in Kalgoorlie to mark the fourth anniversary of Telstra Country Wide. Country Wide was launched in June 2000 to build a local presence for Telstra and grow the company's business in these areas. Highlights of the venture include continued strong performance in service delivery; wider digital CDMA mobile phone coverage; improved internet availability and affordability through a range of dial-up, wireless and satellite delivery technologies; an increased local shopfront presence via a network of shops, store, shop counters and agents through regional Australia; and the continued upgrade of services in remote areas, including indigenous communities.

Maddington mineral laboratory gets grant boost

Maddington business Genalysis Laboratory Services has received a \$13,544 grant from the Federal Government's Export Market Development Grants and I met with representative Rauno Tolonen this month to discuss the company's successful application.

These grants recognise the hard work and commitment invested by Australian companies to build an export market for their projects and services. AMDG also provides important financial support to help them continue and expand their success overseas. Just as importantly, the grants offer a boost to the local community. Exporters provide vital jobs for Australians in this area and around the country. In fact, one in five Australian jobs depends on exports, or one in four



Due to the tremendous benefits of exporting, the Australian Government has set a target to double the number of Australian exporters by 2006.

I'd encourage all local companies that aren't already selling overseas to consider getting into exporting and to take advantage of the EMDG scheme and other Austrade services. The EMDG scheme, which is administered by Austrade, is the Federal Government's primary financial assistance program for aspiring and current

exporters. In 2002-2003 over 3800 small and medium businesses around Australia received grants under the scheme. For more information on the scheme and how Austrade can help exporters, contact Austrade on 13 28 78 or visit <http://www.austrade.gov.au>

E-health to pave the way for better health care in regional West Australia

The recent opening of an e-health video unit at the Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital was an exciting demonstration of how people in regional and rural areas of WA will in the future be linked to the best specialists in the teaching hospitals without needing to leave their home town.

A demonstration consultation was held between a patient in the Kalgoorlie Hospital and two specialists at the Royal Perth Hospital.

The Regional Director of Goldfields South Health Region, Ms Bronwen Scott, told me that the video-link scheme would mean that

patients would not have to go to Perth so often for treatment, which would save a lot of money in the Patient Assistance Travel Scheme fares alone.

The e-health video link is one of the benefits of the extension of broadband promoted by the Howard Government. It is planned to equip 56



I was pleased to speak with Bronwen Scott about the Kalgoorlie health initiative which, as a former country GP, I will be following closely as it will bring great benefit to medical services in regional WA.

centres across WA to access the e-health service which mean a great improvement in health care in regional WA.

This new project is in addition to the Howard Government's \$9.2 million Access to Broadband for GPs Initiative.

Free trade agreements the focus at Caversham presentation

I was pleased to join De-Anne Kelly, who is the Parliamentary Trade Secretary, at Sandalford Winery in Caversham for a meeting with local food and wine producers.

In addition to making a presentation with a focus on the wine sector, Mrs Kelly spoke about the Government's trade policy achievements and the benefits of Free Trade Agreements. This provided an opportunity for local producers to ask questions about the agreements, with one of Mrs Kelly's FTA negotiators in attendance.

In early February 2004, the Australian Government concluded negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement with the US — the world's largest economy. It is a truly landmark deal, the most bilateral economic agreement ever undertaken by Australia.

This followed a Free Trade Agreement cemented in October 2003 with Thailand after more than a year of negotiations, in addition to last year's



Pictured at the Caversham event with Swan Chamber of Commerce president Peter McDowell and De-Anne Kelly

Singapore agreement. Free trade agreements pave the way for great advantages for our export industry. For details, visit www.dfat.gov.au

Ningaloo Ocean and Earth Research Centre proposal

An exciting project in sustainable use of the pipelines could provide a focal point for research in the Exmouth Gulf, Ningaloo Reef and Cape Range region. I recently attended a meeting in Exmouth with proponents for the Ningaloo Ocean and Earth Research Centre. In addition to the research benefits, it is hoped the project would help the long-term sustainable use of the region's natural resources and promote economic development and investment in Exmouth. With increased focus on our Ningaloo Reef, and its increasing exposure to tourists, it is important to ensure a sustainable future for this area and more scientific research will become increasingly important. Potential use groups include tertiary education providers, state and federal government agencies and international research bodies and educators. I support this project whole-heartedly and believe it will provide an excellent opportunity for development in our Gascoyne region.



At the Exmouth Marina after talking with interested parties about the project

News *briefs*

Applications are open for two veterans grants — one for activities which will improve their well being and another for refurbishing memorials or undertaking commemorative events. For more details visit: www.dva.gov.au

Foodland Australia Ltd, which owns the Action Supermarket chain, has signed the Retailers Code of Practice, committing to halving plastic bag usage by 2005. For details on plastics in the environment, visit: www.deh.gov.au/plasticdebris

Three WA acts have been successful in securing a total of \$7500 in bUzz grants from the Australia Council. The performers are based in Northbridge, Highgate and Victoria Park. bUzz are small grants for artists under 26.

The Australian Government has launched control manuals for three of the nation's 20 national weeds of significance. These are lantana, parthenium and rubber vine. Other manuals are in progress. For copies visit www.weeds.org.au

More doctors for outer metropolitan areas

Twenty two new doctors have moved to under serviced areas of Perth under the Australian Government's *More Doctors for Outer Metropolitan Areas Measure*.

GPs and specialists in many fast growing outer urban areas have been unable to keep up with rising demand for health services, leading to long waiting times for patients. But the outstanding success of the *More Doctors* program is changing this.

The program originally aimed to attract 150 doctors to eligible areas with doctor shortages across the nation. But by early May, just 16 months after it began, 161 doctors had either moved or agreed to move to under-serviced areas. Many more doctors are expected to apply for the incentive grants available through the program, before the closing date in December, making it likely that the program will greatly exceed

expectations. The program offers relocation grants of up to \$30,000 to GPs and specialists who establish a new practice in eligible areas and up to \$20,000 to those who join an existing practice in an area of doctor shortage.

Most doctors receiving the grants are moving from inner suburbs which are well served by doctors. The grants were due to end last December but the Government decided last January to extend it for a year, allowing many more doctors to take up the offer. Under-serviced outer metropolitan areas will also benefit from other measures to boost the medical workforce in the Medicare *Plus* package.

These include incentive grants to encourage doctors in these areas to employ practices nurses, to ease the load on GPs and funding for graduate doctors to undertake short term placements in outer urban or rural areas