

TOURISM — ROTTNEST ISLAND

95. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Minister for Tourism:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's record investment in tourism, which is delivering a record number of visitors to WA, supporting WA tourism businesses and helping create jobs. Can the minister update the house on how this government is ensuring that Rottnest Island remains an attractive tourism destination for visitors and can continue supporting the number of tourists who visit the island every year?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I thank the member for his enthusiastic support of tourism and for that question. Rottnest Island is a great story for all Western Australians—I do not think anyone would dispute that. We have massively boosted the number of visitors to the island under the McGowan government. In fact, last year we exceeded the 2034 target for visitor numbers, with over 800 000 visitors, and that was the number anticipated a decade or more hence. It is going really well. That obviously brings with it challenges and concerns around ensuring that the facilities meet the requirements of the additional load and the demand. That was why I was very happy to recently go to Fremantle and announce with the federal assistant minister a combined amount of more than \$33 million spend on the island, which is the biggest infrastructure spend in a long time on the island. Of that, \$16.2 million was from the state government, which will predominantly go towards some really substantial upgrades to core infrastructure. The fuel jetty is going to be completely rebuilt, effectively. There will also be construction of a new barge landing area to ease the pressure on the main jetty and move logistics out of the settlement area. The fuel jetty will offer improved facilities and accessibility to the island, including power and water, new finger jetties, improved refuelling and berthing for small vessels, and an extended end platform. The tender for that is being sought right now. We will see the demolition and reconstruction of that facility very soon, and Western Australians will be able to see their tax dollars put to good use on the island.

The federal government has also come to the party, and I am very thankful for that. There was \$17.2 million from the federal government under its tourism icons program. That money will start to be spent soon. Nine projects will benefit from the funding, including the rugged and remote west end, which, by the end of this year, will have new shelters, seating, access pathways, viewing platforms and an ablution building. The project will also deliver public artwork and interactive features by Noongar artists at that part of the island. There will also be new infrastructure at one of the island's premier swimming spots—the Basin—that many on this side enjoyed recently. The Treasurer, in his absence, will be very happy to hear that not only will ablutions facilities be improved, but also I am sure the foot-washing facilities will be improved so that he will not have to have dirty feet when he goes into his chalet in the future. That is an in-joke! The Wadjemup Hill lighthouse area is also having a makeover, including a transport hub, a new shaded seating area and an upgrade to the lighthouse keeper's cottage. There will be new wayfinding signage to help visitors navigate around the island. I would like to conclude by thanking the federal government for its contribution. It has worked with us on this. As a consequence of our \$16 million contribution and the federal government's \$17 million contribution, we have the biggest investment on infrastructure on the island by a state government since the last time WA Labor was in government, and that is a significant thing. I think there was a pretty good tourism minister at that point. He was not quite as exceptional as the current one, but he did well and he delivered, and he is delivering again as the Premier!