

INVESTMENT AND TRADE COMMISSIONER FOR ASEAN

583. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. How can our Indonesian neighbours take the Western Australian Labor government seriously when in 2021 one of the government's first acts was to scrap the Asian engagement portfolio?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

That is simply not correct. We continue to work on our Asian engagement strategy that continues to be a key part of our engagement with the South-East Asian economies. If the member for Vasse thinks that somehow people are not confident, she simply need to look at not only the expressions of interest, but also the waitlist of people who want to come on the Indonesian trade mission. If the member for Vasse thinks that the Indonesian government does not have confidence in us, why did the President of the Republic of Indonesia invite me to Sydney as part of his Asian tour? At that meeting, we signed a plan of action with the Australian–Indonesian business council, or KADIN, that was witnessed by the President of the Republic Indonesia. I said to him, “Your Excellency, it would be much easier if we met in Perth because that is much closer for both of us”, but he was very pleased to engage with us. I was the only Premier in Australia invited to that meeting, even though it was held in New South Wales. I think that members can see the level of confidence that the Indonesians have in engaging with Western Australian people.