

STUDYPERTH — STUDENT HUB

**232. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Minister for International Education:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to supporting the return of international students to Western Australia.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the new StudyPerth student hub?
- (2) Can the minister outline to the house how this government's significant investment in other support packages is helping to ensure the return of international students to Western Australia and to make sure that return is as seamless as possible?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:**

- (1)–(2) Yes, I can. I thank the member for Thornlie for his question. It is a very important question. I want to assure the house that everything is being done to ensure not only that our international student sector is strong, but also, of course, that international students to Western Australia return. They are returning in their thousands because of the commitment by the McGowan government to ensure that they are welcomed and supported when they arrive.

Recently, I attended the opening of the new StudyPerth student hub, which is in the centre of the city. The hub will provide international students with facilities to support them, allow them to connect with each other and assist them to enmesh themselves in the Western Australian lifestyle. It will be strongly supported and encouraged. When I was there, there was an opportunity to talk to a number of our education sector representatives who were present and learn from them firsthand about the increase in the number of international students for semester 1, and, of course, they are also experiencing increased demand for semester 2 of this year. Of course, the state government has announced and is implementing a range of support mechanisms funded by significant funding. This is an important consideration. As part of our \$77 million state transition industry support package, some \$16 million of that is specifically focused on international education and supports. That includes an industry support fund, which includes a \$6 million provision to medium and small-sized international education providers. This allows for between \$50 000 and \$100 000 to assist those small and medium providers to ensure that they can continue to build and strengthen as they seek to support and encourage international student numbers. An \$8 million student quarantine support program has been provided and a \$2 million university support services for students program, as well.

I want to highlight that as soon as we announced these very important measures, the take-up has already been quite remarkable. I want to highlight an example of that. The accommodation subsidy and the English language intensive courses for overseas students—ELICOS—bursary are also open, through these programs by the McGowan government, for international students to apply. Since last Friday, already, over 1 200 applications have been received. The airport welcome desks—I know that the Minister for Tourism has been to the welcome desk at the airport—opened on 3 March. They are located in terminal 1 and terminals 3 and 4 at Perth Airport and continue to operate and welcome international students who arrive on those international flights. The students are met upon arrival by StudyPerth team members—I want to pay tribute to the StudyPerth team members—and are greeted by an international student greeter. All of this is focused on making sure that we continue to position Western Australia as the place to come to study at our outstanding educational facilities and educational institutions here. If students are seeking to learn English, they can come across through our ELICOS program to do that. Of course, we are also focused on looking at new markets and strengthening existing markets, so that work will continue.

We all know that Western Australia is a great place to live and work, but we want to open that up to even more international students to come here to the safest place on earth to live, work, study and learn, because we know that those international students ensure that we have an even more diverse and vibrant community. That is what they bring to this community when they come across to Western Australia. We welcome them; we have welcomed them with a huge investment in international education, and it is now paying off, because we are seeing thousands and thousands of students enrolling and making their way back to Western Australia, and I am looking forward to those numbers improving as we move forwards towards semester 2. I can assure members that in terms of market, we will be in market with those countries and selling Western Australia to them as a great place to come and learn and live and enjoy what this magnificent state has to offer.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Roe with the last question.