

TOURISM — VISITORS

383. Ms C.M. ROWE to the Minister for Tourism:

I refer to the now Cook Labor government's efforts over many years to increase the number of visitors to WA. Can the minister advise the house what the significant investment made by visitors in WA means for local jobs, small business and tourism operators across the state, and can the minister advise the house what steps the government is taking to further build WA's tourism industry?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

I thank the member for Belmont for that question. As the new Minister for Tourism, I am very focused on continuing the good work of my predecessors, the now Premier, the Minister for Police, who was tourism minister for many years, and, of course, the member for Mandurah.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I was a bit shorter.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: He was probably the least successful tourism minister. During his term, the borders were closed and we did not get any international or interstate visitors!

Mr D.A. Templeman: I have never been great at timing.

The SPEAKER: Minister, there are standing orders about adverse reflections!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I can move a motion to that effect. We could suspend standing orders and have a debate because I think the facts will be there! International and interstate tourism dropped under the Minister for Culture and the Arts —

Mr D.A. Templeman: Can you get on with the question, please?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The good thing is that things have changed after I inherited tourism from the Premier, who was driving the bounce back in our tourism spend and activity since the global pandemic. Of course, the tourism industry is an essential and key part of diversifying the economy, creating jobs and helping us to meet our jobs target—we actually surpassed our jobs target today—and continuing to provide opportunities and career choices for Western Australians across the state. As I have said, we have seen a significant tourism bounce back. In 2022, the total spend by visitors in Western Australia was \$14 billion, which was \$500 million more than in 2019. We have seen expenditure across the regions as well. During the pandemic we saw significant tourism throughout regional WA. The good thing is that people saw regional events or had regional experiences and now they are going back because they got to experience our first-class regional tourism events.

We have some exciting events coming thanks to the former Minister for Tourism. We will hold the Repco Supercars Championship for another two years.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Good on you.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, Minister for Energy.

We will hold five FIFA Women's World Cup games here in Perth. I am very excited about that. Perth will also host a couple of English Premier League games between West Ham United and Tottenham Hotspur, led by Australian manager Ange Postecoglou. Three Matildas games will be played in October and, of course, Coldplay will be performing, which all our friends in the eastern states are very angry about. We have direct flights to London, Rome, Manila and Jakarta. The direct flight to Tokyo will start by the end of October and the tickets became available yesterday. We will continue to drive tourism in this state. It is a glorious state to experience. Our focus continues to be on obtaining more direct flights. That is a very hard task because there is a shortage of aircraft around the world post the global pandemic, but we are very much continuing the work of the now Premier in negotiating with airlines around the world to bring more airlines back to WA. We are supporting industry attractions, tourism infrastructure and events. We continue to build our events calendar to make sure that people from the eastern states and international visitors have a great experience, and also so that Western Australians can enjoy events and experiences that they can be proud of. We will continue to work on behalf of the tourism industry and the many small businesses in that industry to promote this great state.