

MARGARET RIVER GOURMET ESCAPE

290. Mrs L.M. HARVEY to the Minister for Tourism:

I see that the first major signing for the Margaret River Gourmet Escape is Heston Blumenthal, owner of the famous Fat Duck restaurant in the United Kingdom, and currently rated, I believe, in the top 10 for the San Pellegrino awards for his new restaurant, Dinner by Heston Blumenthal. Can the minister please advise the house what other attractions the Gourmet Escape will bring to Western Australia?

Dr K.D. HAMES replied:

I thank the member for the question. The new announcement that the government has recently made about the Margaret River Gourmet Escape is something that I have to say has been a long time coming, and it is extremely welcomed by this government. We have had significant investment, particularly with the additional funds through royalties for regions, for regional events, on a range of different things, mostly around sport, around fashion and around music and the like. But I do not think we have ever had an event that fully encompasses the huge opportunities we have to showcase Western Australia in the area of food and wine; and this event will do that. Heston Blumenthal, who has been ranked world number one, but is, I think, currently ranked world number five, and René Redzepi, who is currently world number one, will be coming here to Western Australia for that event. Lots of other international and Australian, and in fact Western Australian, chefs will also be coming to this event. Some of those are Justin North from Bécasse in Sydney, Perth rising star Matt Stone from Greenhouse, and Dany Angove from Leeuwin Estate. We hope to also get guys like Alain Fabrègues from the Loose Box —

Mr T.R. Buswell: Very impressive!

Dr K.D. HAMES: He is very impressive. I was actually with him at lunchtime at the truffle festival launch, which is also on today. In fact, we are hoping to get Neil Perry along to that event as well. A large number of international chefs are coming here to provide for the people of Western Australia a celebration of the food and wine that we have to offer.

There will be a huge number of events. There will be the Gourmet Village at the famous Leeuwin wine estate. That will be open to the public. There will be master classes, restaurants, cooking demonstrations, wine theatre, wine matching programs, “meet the winemaker” sessions, and so on and so forth. There will be a cocktail and wine bar, which will be located at one of the region’s iconic natural locations, and that is not finalised yet, so I cannot announce where that will be, but it will be fantastic. There will be a public beach barbecue, at which people can learn from the world’s best chefs how to cook food on a barbecue—not that I could not teach them, of course, but I think having international chefs do that might be somewhat up the rung! There will be Lunch in the Vines, which will be a long-table lunch at one of the best known wineries in Western Australia. There will be Official Wine Routes, which will be three or four wine routes throughout the Margaret River area. There will also be an Icon Celebration, where each year, someone who is an icon of the food and wine industry internationally will be announced at the event in Western Australia.

The event will be managed by Brand Events, which, as members know, is the originator of *MasterChef* and *Junior MasterChef*, and hopefully some of those chefs as well will be able to come to this event. Although Brand Events is an international company, it does have an office in Sydney, and it is looking at setting up an office also in the Margaret River region.

This event will not just highlight the famous food and wine from Margaret River. It will be able to look into areas around Margaret River, like the Great Southern, which, too, is famous for the food and wine that it produces, to make sure that we get international recognition for the fabulous food and wine that we have on offer here in Western Australia. All the people involved in the event are extremely excited. People from the south west are excited. I think there are many people in the metropolitan area who would love to get to Margaret River for that event and enjoy the best that Western Australia has to offer.