

REGIONAL SPONSORED MIGRATION SCHEME — INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

554. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Tourism:

I have a supplementary question. How much damage has to occur to the tourism and education sectors before the minister reverses the decision on the regional sponsored migration scheme, or does this sector have to wait for the minister to be replaced?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

This is well and truly outside my portfolio; nevertheless, I read a press release today from the Minister for Education and Training announcing a wonderful initiative that was overlooked and completely ignored by the previous government. No effort was put into this part of the international student sector, trying to get that high-end skilled migration associated with PhD, masters and honours students—those who come for a long time and contribute enormously with their research and support of innovative industry initiatives in this state. We are now enabling that program and we have to say that yet again we are pursuing the other states.

Mrs L.M. Harvey interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Scarborough!

Mr P. PAPALIA: We are coming in their wake because the previous government failed to act. It made no effort and its members did not identify that this was an opportunity we were missing out on because they were too busy drinking cocktails in the courtyard.

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected: What a good line you have been given by the office.

The SPEAKER: I have got a good line for you, member for Bateman; I call you to order for the first time.