

TOURISM — CELLAR DOOR REBATE

546. Mr P. PAPALIA to the Minister for Tourism:

I refer to your government's decision to cut the cellar door rebate and impose significant additional costs on key tourism operators in Margaret River, the Geopraphe area, great southern, Perth hills and Swan Valley.

- (1) Why did not the minister not even consult with the winery tourism businesses affected before announcing the cut in the budget?
- (2) Does the minister agree with Wines of Western Australia that, and I quote, it is clear from the budget papers and in subsequent media announcements that the economic impact of the decision was not considered?
- (3) Is the minister aware that the owners of the affected businesses have confirmed the cut will result in loss of jobs in restaurants attached to cellar doors and cancellation of significant tourism projects like hotels and wineries?

Dr K.D. HAMES replied:

- (1)–(3) I am happy to answer this question as the Minister for Tourism, but clearly it was not initiated by me or by the Western Australian Tourism Commission; this was initiated by the Minister for Agriculture and Food. The proposal that was put forward that was accepted by cabinet was that this would affect only a limited number of operators—the larger operators in the industry—and that the very strong view held by those putting forward the proposal was that it would not have a significant effect on tourism and on those people who were putting it forward. I have not yet seen any evidence to the contrary. I know there are concerns being expressed by those involved in the industry. In particular, I have seen some letters suggesting that it will not just affect the big operators and that the smaller operators will be affected as well, but I have not seen any evidence to suggest that is true.