

MARGARET RIVER GOURMET ESCAPE

Statement by Minister for Tourism

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Minister for Tourism) [9.03 am]: Events tourism is a key part of the Liberal–National government’s tourism strategy. One such event, which also receives support from the government’s royalties for regions program, is the Margaret River Gourmet Escape. Only in its second year, this event is already exceeding expectations. Last year’s Margaret River Gourmet Escape was held in Margaret River and satellite locations in the south west from 22 to 24 November. Tourism Western Australia undertakes regular evaluation of major events sponsored by the state government through a range of market research companies. Metrix Consulting was engaged by the agency to analyse data from the Gourmet Escape and prepare an economic impact and attendee satisfaction report. I am pleased to advise that after its second year of operation, the event is already delivering quantifiable results beyond the targets set when it was being developed. Key economic findings from the 2013 event include an economic impact for the region of \$10.5 million; that 1 280 interstate and international visitors stayed 6 793 nights at an average length of stay of 5.3 nights and spent \$315 on average per day; and that 10 171 Western Australians attended, generating 39 103 nights at an average length of stay of 3.8 nights with an average daily spend of \$255. Total visitation, visitor nights and visitor expenditure figures have already exceeded the targets that were set for the 2014 Gourmet Escape. Key findings from an attendee satisfaction perspective include that 93 per cent of attendees were satisfied with the event and that 69 per cent were very satisfied. The most positive aspects of the event, as viewed by the attendees, were seeing high-profile celebrities as well as experiencing great food, great atmosphere and great wine. Attendees asked that more seated and shaded areas be available at future events, and this has been noted by the organisers.

In addition to the Metrix findings, a considerable amount of media coverage was generated before and during the event in international and national media in our key tourism markets. Notably, chef icon Heston Blumenthal was quoted in the media as saying that there is no other food and wine festival like this on the planet. I am pleased to table the Metrix report, “Evaluating the 2013 Margaret River Gourmet Escape”, which clearly demonstrates the value of the Liberal–National government’s support for events across our great state.

[See paper 1516.]