

TOURISM — SCOOT AIRLINES — FLIGHTS TO PERTH

Statement by Minister for Tourism

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Minister for Tourism) [12.05 pm]: I rise to inform the house about a major boost to the state's tourism industry, with the exciting announcement I made this morning about low-cost carrier Scoot Airlines flying to Perth. Scoot Airlines will commence services to Perth from 19 December this year, operating five flights a week from Singapore using its 402-seat Boeing 777s.

Perth is the twelfth destination to be added to Scoot's network, and the third within Australia after Sydney and the Gold Coast. Singapore is Western Australia's third largest source market for visitors, providing more than 70 000 travellers last financial year. They contributed an estimated \$164 million to the Western Australian economy. The extra competition and seat capacity on the popular route are expected to supplement these excellent results and benefit Western Australia's tourism industry.

Tourism WA, Tourism Australia and Scoot Airlines are collaborating on a two-year cooperative marketing campaign to promote Perth and Western Australia in the Singapore market. Western Australia's size and isolation mean that most of our visitors arrive by air, and this government has an impressive record of achievement in developing all-important air linkages with our key tourism markets. In fact, international aviation capacity into Western Australia has increased 67 per cent since September 2008.

I commend the former Minister for Tourism, who successfully completed negotiations with China Southern Airlines that saw that airline commence direct flights to Perth from the lucrative China market in November 2011. This has resulted in the number of Chinese visitors to WA increasing to 31 500 at the end of 2012–13, which is around 50 per cent more than was the case in the previous year. It is the state government's aim to grow the number of visitors from China to 100 000 by 2020. In addition, in July 2012, Qatar Airways launched direct services between Doha and Perth, which provides improved connectivity for travellers from our European markets. In June this year, Garuda Indonesia reinstated direct services between Jakarta and Perth. Indonesia used to be an important source market for Western Australia, and we anticipate this service and the supporting marketing activity will help us regain the visitor numbers we used to attract. Under this government, airline attraction has really taken off and is further evidence of our ongoing commitment to support the state's vitally important tourism industry.