

PERTH 2011 ISAF SAILING WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

**222. Mr J.M. FRANCIS to the Minister for Tourism:**

I will just quickly wish my good little mate Rex a very happy fifth birthday today. He is at home watching. My question is to the —

Several members interjected.

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** That is a bit “ruff”. My question is to the —

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Jandakot, although some of us in this place may appreciate the sentiment of your opening remarks, I would prefer to hear just a question from you. I am going to give you the opportunity now.

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** I know from media coverage in December that some Fremantle businesses were less than happy with the amount of trade during the recent sailing championships. However, a recent report told of the event providing a great return on investment, so how does the minister reconcile that difference in perceived outcomes of that event?

**Dr K.D. HAMES replied:**

Some comments were made during the Perth 2011 ISAF Sailing World Championships, or more particularly towards the end of the ISAF event, by the opposition—largely by the member for Perth, who seems to be against everything, and chiming in behind him was the shadow spokesperson for tourism—about the dreadful event. It was quite funny, of course, because we did not approve the event; the former government from the other side approved the event —

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** A minor detail!

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** Yes—with a great deal of support.

**Mr M. McGowan:** You ran it.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** Indeed, we did run it, and that is why it was run extremely well. The opposition was calling for an inquiry at the time, and we said, “Well, good call, but we already do a study post-events to see the outcome of those events.” That study has just been concluded and released. In fact, the event was an enormous success. I will go through the areas in which it was a success. About \$8 million was invested by the state government, which was matched, coincidentally, by a Labor government, the federal government, which put in a similar amount of money. Obviously, it was very confident in the way we run events and also very confident about the potential outcomes. So both state and federal governments put in an amount in the order of \$8 million. The estimated economic return to Western Australia was just under \$39 million.

I well recall the current Leader of the Opposition canning the foreshore rally—I am pretty sure they were the Leader of the Opposition’s comments—because it did not provide a big enough return on the investment being made by the state government. This one certainly does. It was a very popular event, I might add.

**Mr M. McGowan** interjected.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** That is the reason I have moved away from that particular focus when doing events. But this event was enormously successful in providing that great return on investment. In terms of the number of people who attended, there were estimated to be 9 300 visitors all up, who stayed for an average of 21 days. That is 197 000 visitor nights. On top of that, there were more than 455 hours of television coverage to 105 countries throughout the world. It was a magnificent event. Not only that; it provided significant support for some of the less advantaged countries around the world, because there were special sailing programs to provide that assistance —

An opposition member: Foreign aid.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** Yes; foreign aid, if you want. Western Australia provided foreign aid to countries around the world that did not have sailing programs.

Some areas of concern were expressed by some of the local operators, so that was included in the study. In fact, it was a mixed result, because we found that 26 per cent reported a positive impact from the event and 27 per cent a negative impact. The negative ones were largely because the people of Western Australia who were the normal customers of some of those shops expected large crowds to be there, so they stayed away from their normal haunts. It is true that that component, the village, did not go as well as was predicted by the operators. Nevertheless, every other aspect was achieved.

What is really important is that this was not there just to be entertainment for the people of Western Australia; this was an international competitive event, and we were lucky enough to have been awarded that event here in Western Australia, and the operators did a fantastic job in running it. I want to congratulate those involved, and

they are people who are far more famous than any members on the other side will ever be in this state. John Longley, Ian Campbell and Peter Gilmour did a magnificent job. At the end of the day, when the event has gone, some benefits still remain for Western Australia. It is not only from the international coverage of the event. The operators of that event have left about \$1 million worth of physical assets for sailing groups throughout the state, particularly for youth groups, including 23 rigid inflatable boats, six Laser class boats, six RS:X boards, and 250 waterproof hand-held radios. They were all left behind for the benefit of the local community and local clubs. It was a magnificent event, and it was a great return on the taxpayers' dollars in Western Australia.