

TOURISM — INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

**212. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Tourism:**

I refer to the minister's answer to the house on 14 March 2018 about international visitor numbers; I quote, that "the numbers increased by 52 417". Can the minister explain to the house why he embellished the brief ministerial statement that was drafted by the department, and in the process changed the total number of bookings to additional visitors, therefore misleading the house?

**Mr P. PAPALIA replied:**

I have no idea what the member is getting at with this question. It is true that when we came to office we inherited a diabolical situation in tourism. As has been indicated in the media release by the federal Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, Hon Steve Ciobo, tourism to Western Australia over the past three years has been on a downward trajectory. If we extended it further left, we would find the same thing. The chief executive officer of the Tourism Council of Western Australia indicated that interstate visitation dropped by 30 per cent during the boom years. That was all under the previous government's watch. Members opposite are responsible for the neglect of tourism for eight and a half years. With respect to recent activity, it is true that since we took office we have taken action to fix things. Within the first month of taking office, we saved the Margaret River Pro. The previous government had lost that. In the first month of taking office, we saved cruise shipping to Western Australia. Carnival Cruises was leaving and we saved it. The previous government had lost it. We delivered in September the biggest amount of funding for destination marketing and events in the history of the state. More importantly, we gave certainty over the out years, and flexibility that enabled Tourism WA to launch an emergency campaign in September. Between the months of September and December last year —

*Point of Order*

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** I refer to standing order 78—an answer must be relevant to the question. The question is clearly about the figures, and the member has asked the question whether the minister was misleading the Parliament by giving wrong figures, and he is not answering the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I am sure the minister will get to the answer soon.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** It gets foggier and foggier. I have no idea what the member is getting at, but between September and December last year, as a consequence of our change to funding—our increase in funding—and the flexibility we provided to the Tourism WA administration, particularly its board, it initiated an emergency campaign to fill our hotel rooms targeted on Singapore, Malaysia, China and the east coast of Australia. It resulted, according to Tourism WA, in 53 417 additional people coming to the state. Those numbers were provided by that agency. It was in direct response to a campaign that we enabled through our flexibility that we had given to the funding. We are trying to fix the previous government's mess. It is a long, hard road, but I am sure that we will achieve it.