

QANTAS — PERTH–SINGAPORE ROUTE

77. MR N.W. MORTON to the Minister for Tourism:

Many Western Australians will be disappointed by Qantas' announcement today that it will withdraw the Perth–Singapore route. Can the minister inform the house what impact this decision will have on tourism in Western Australia?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

I thank the member for Forrestfield for the question. It was, indeed, a very disappointing announcement today from Qantas with not only the loss of 5 000 jobs, and there will be many employees of Qantas in Western Australia —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I find it astonishing that we can talk about job losses like this and have members opposite interject. I will endeavour to update the house on what the state government is doing about this issue. As I was saying, it was very disappointing to hear that there will be job losses across the Qantas network. Indeed, some of those losses may well occur here in Western Australia, which puts those families in a very invidious position. Some Western Australians may also have had their travel plans disrupted as a result of today's abrupt announcement. Overall, Singapore is a very important market for Western Australia. The visitation to Perth from Singapore is in the order of 72 000 visitors a year and we have seen growth in that market over the past few years. Qantas has a 13 per cent share of that visitation and the expectation, I am advised, is that the other carriers that fly between Singapore and Perth will pick up that market share.

Qantas also advised in its announcement that the Singapore route had been underperforming for quite some time, so on 21 March 2013 Qantas cut back its service from Singapore to Perth from two flights a day to one flight a day.

Mr B.S. Wyatt interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Victoria Park, I formally call you to order for the second time today.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Qantas will no longer run that service. It is important for us to note that the joint marketing arrangement we entered into with Qantas is a \$7.65 million deal, which I announced last September, and will go over three years. The way we structure deals with our airline partners for the purpose of joint marketing is to get access to their frequent flyer databases and loyalty programs. In the announcement today, Qantas reinforced its commitment to its loyalty program and to its loyal customers. The essence of the joint marketing arrangement was to market our "Experience Extraordinary" destinations to a database of people already considering travelling.

I am pleased to say that today there was no announcement about any changes whatsoever to the 130 domestic flights coming to Perth from Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne. Those eastern states markets are definitely among our target markets and a market share we are intending to increase by way of some of the joint marketing arrangements we have with Qantas. Altogether, we have 56 weekly flights from Singapore to Perth. The airlines carrying those important tourists to Western Australia are Singapore Airlines, Jetstar, Tigerair and Scoot, and we have arrangements with Jetstar, Singapore Airlines and Scoot along similar lines—that is, to be putting our "Experience Extraordinary" destinations and Perth in front of people already making those decisions to travel.

The other aspect of this matter I think it is important to note is that Qantas advised that it will still put on supplementary services around peak travel times. Between 3 July and 27 July, which are school holidays here in Western Australia, it will put some supplementary services on to move travellers between the two countries. I think that is very important for Western Australia. Qantas customers in Western Australia will still have access to Qantas routes through the codeshare arrangement it has with Emirates, so, importantly, we will still be getting access to our key destinations of the United Kingdom, the United States and Germany. Of course, Singapore Airlines customers will still have access to the "Experience Extraordinary" brand through that frequent flyer joint marketing agreement. I put on the record that the state government remains committed to growing our market share in Singapore. We remain committed to continuing to put our "Experience Extraordinary" destinations marketing out there to not only Singapore, but also those target markets we intend to improve our market share in. This is all part of our broader strategy to grow the tourism industry in Western Australia to \$12 billion by 2020.