

TOURISM — BROOME

731. Ms J. FARRER to the Minister for Tourism:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to creating more jobs in the Kimberley and across regional WA through its record investment in tourism. Can the minister update the house on the dredging work that is currently underway at Broome port, and can the minister also advise the house how these upgrades will attract more cruise ships to Broome and grow tourism in the region?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

Can I thank the wonderful member for Kimberley for her fantastic question, and not only for her strong advocacy for the entire Kimberley region, but also her support for tourism growth in the Kimberley in particular. There is great news. There was not great news, though, when we first came to office, member. I think members may recall that one of the most distressing pieces of news that I inherited from the previous appalling management of tourism in Western Australia by the previous government, apart from the loss of the Margaret River Pro, was the impending loss of homeporting of cruise shipping in Western Australia.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse!

Mr P. PAPALIA: It was brought to my attention, and I have the letter from the CEO of Carnival Cruise Line Australia to the previous Premier —

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It was sent in September 2016 and drew to the then Premier and tourism minister's attention that were the government not to commit to dredging Broome harbour, making some aesthetic improvements to Fremantle port, and putting \$1 million towards shore-side tensioning in Geraldton, it would withdraw homeporting from Western Australia.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse, it is your last warning.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The then Premier did nothing, really. He sent into action the then Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Tourism—none other than the now member for Darling Range. He thought she might sort it out, so he had her meet with the senior executives from Carnival in December or January of 2017. That resulted in no outcome and, as a consequence, sadly, when I came into office, there was a letter—confirmed with a personal phone call that I made to the CEO of Carnival to find out what I could do about it—confirming that the previous government had failed so dismally that Carnival was going to withdraw homeporting. That happened, and there was a 30 per cent reduction in the number of cruise visitors, and a reduction from \$385 million a year to \$275 million, or thereabouts, in one year as a consequence of its failure. We took on the task, and I can report to the house that as of now, the long-awaited dredging of Broome harbour is underway. It is on the way to being dredged. Interestingly, Minister for Transport, the cost has gone up considerably since the initial estimates. Nevertheless, we have committed to it, and it is going to happen.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse, I call you to order. I have warned you three times. Just listen.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The reason it is important is that there are obstacles in Broome harbour. They have been there for a long, long time—forever. They limit large cruise ship access to tidal windows. Now, when we get rid of those obstacles, there will be 24/7 access. Large cruise ships will be able to come in at night-time, disgorge their passengers in the daytime, and receive them all again in the evening, and sail under perfect operational conditions for those cruise ships. Broome is the most sought-after cruise destination in the country for Carnival passengers. As a consequence of this and all the other investments by the McGowan government in the Broome region, such as sealing Cape Leveque Road and the affordable flights, they love us in Broome; they are very appreciative. Whenever I go there, my friend Harold Tracey commends the government for its efforts. We have made a significant change to optimism and tourism prospects in Broome. Cruise shipping is set to boom. It will go from around 18 port visits this year to about 32 next year. It is all good news, and the member should be very proud of what her government is delivering to her region.