

PERTH CONVENTION BUREAU

661. Mr P. PAPALIA to the Minister for Tourism:

I refer to a report in *The West Australian* of 31 July regarding the government's cuts to funding for the Perth Convention Bureau and the impact of those cuts.

- (1) How does the minister justify the \$5.3 million cut, noting that it will result in the loss of \$85 million in revenue and the loss of jobs in the Western Australian tourism sector?
- (2) Before he decided to make the cut, did the minister meet with the Perth Convention Bureau to discuss the potential impacts of the cut?

Dr K.D. HAMES replied:

- (1)–(2) The member is correct that over the forward estimates those funds have been significantly reduced. The funds are the same for the current financial year, 2015–16, and it is proposed in the forward estimates that funding be reduced by, I think, approximately \$500 000 in the following year and progressively increase over the forward estimates at that time.

It was the view of government in going through and formulating our budget, where there was considerable financial difficulty, that all government departments would be required to make a contribution to addressing the total deficit and, where possible, the total reduction in funding received by the state government through the low GST and a significant reduction in the price of iron ore. We had to carry our weight, the same as every other government department. The view of government was that there was an opportunity for the private sector to take over the space that was vacated. The state government was investing in a significant proportion of the total cost of running that facility. There is certainly money from the private sector also, but a significant proportion is state government money and the view of government was that the private sector could make a greater contribution. In the end, the beneficiaries of that are largely people who work within the tourism industry—our hotels, restaurants and cafes—and the view of government was that they could make a greater contribution towards their own income in the future.