

McGOWAN GOVERNMENT — CHINA VISIT

Statement by Minister for Education and Training

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Minister for Education and Training) [1.02 pm]: I am pleased to report on my recent visit to China with the Premier, Ministers Johnston and Papalia, and Hon Pierre Yang from this house, who was born in northern China and came to Perth as a student. The trip was to promote Perth as an ideal destination for international education. The purpose of this first overseas mission by the Premier was to build government links to strengthen the Western Australian economy, promote the education and tourism sectors and mark the thirtieth anniversary of the sister-state relationship between WA and Zhejiang province.

The promotion of Perth as a quality destination for international students focused largely on the university sector, with 10 senior representatives, including vice-chancellors, from the five WA universities—Curtin University, Edith Cowan University, Murdoch University, the University of Notre Dame Australia and the University of Western Australia. Also present were the principals of the colleges and institutes associated with those universities. Vocational education and secondary education were represented by nine delegates, including the director general of the Department of Training and Workforce Development, the managing director of North Metropolitan TAFE, the principals of two public senior high schools and a private school, and the directors of four private training provider organisations. The director general and TAFE representatives met with major Chinese education agents and various college and university representatives, receiving coverage through Chinese social media. Potential commercial ventures for Western Australian TAFE colleges in the areas of hospitality, tourism and English language training were discussed. I was honoured to support a WA private training provider at the opening of Phoenix Academy's new joint venture college with Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

Highlights of the visit included the Premier's launch of the Western Australian hub and website in Shanghai. The education hub, in the government of Western Australia's China office in Shanghai, will provide hot desks and digital capability for the five Western Australian universities and pathway providers to develop and deliver collaborative programs. The website is hosted in China and a social media campaign will raise awareness of Perth's education, research and tourism opportunities. Education round tables were hosted by the Guangdong province Department of Education, with vice-chancellors from eight universities and four polytechnics; and by Shanghai University of Electric Power, with 42 delegates from the university and its associated colleges. Memoranda of agreement were signed between Curtin University and the Shanghai University of Electric Power and between UWA and the South China University of Technology. In Hangzhou the Zhejiang Department of Foreign and Overseas Chinese Affairs hosted an outdoor function with 120 guests, including alumni from WA and Zhejiang universities, English Language Centre alumni, students from sister schools, prospective students and Zhejiang Department of Education officials.

The delegation enjoyed a very warm reception in the three Chinese cities of Guangzhou, Hangzhou and Shanghai, and I am confident that the existing links with Perth as a destination for international students have been reinforced and strengthened and that many new and valuable connections were made on this visit. The McGowan government is committed to positioning Perth as one of the best global destinations for education and training. To do this we must understand the Chinese market and be able to deliver appropriate student support, as well as provide access to high-quality education services. I am confident that the visit of the international education delegation was highly successful in furthering these objectives.

Point of Order

Hon PETER COLLIER: With regard to this ministerial statement, in the past we have also tabled an itinerary of the tour. Is that forthcoming?

Hon SUE ELLERY: These arrangements are tabled on a regular basis—quarterly, I think.

Hon Peter Collier: It was a ministerial statement.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I do not mind doing that, and I will undertake to do that. I was not aware that that was the normal practice, but I will check and, if I am able to, I will do it.