

AIR SERVICES — BROOME–BRISBANE DIRECT FLIGHTS

Statement

HON KEN BASTON (Mining and Pastoral) [10.12 pm]: I rise to bring to the attention of the house a function that I attended on Sunday a week ago. I thought this is appropriate, bearing in mind that many of us attended drinks in the courtyard with the Tourism Council of Western Australia this evening, and very pleasant that was as well. The function was held in Broome, and it was to celebrate the first direct flight from Brisbane to Broome. Broome Airport welcomed the flight. They had a couple of fire engines spray an arc of water over the plane, which I thought would not be that attractive, but I have to tell members that it was quite amazing when the 737–800 passed through that arc of water.

This direct flight from Brisbane to Broome takes only four hours. If that flight was via Perth, it would take eight hours, 10 minutes minimum, without any delays. This offers a vital link to the Kimberley, not only for tourism, but also for people who work in the tourism industry and the service industry, and of course also for the up and coming oil and gas industry in the Browse Basin. Cathy Freeman, who is the ambassador for Qantas Airlines, was on this inaugural flight, and she spoke at the official function; as did Glen Chidlow from North West Tourism; the President of the Shire of Broome, Graeme Campbell; and the chief executive officer of Broome Airport, Nick Belyea.

There will be a direct service from Brisbane to Broome twice a week, on Thursdays and Sundays; this is, of course, in the dry season. I will run through the other links to Broome that already exist, for the benefit of members who are not aware. There is a direct flight from Adelaide run by Virgin Blue on Saturdays that takes three hours, 50 minutes. If that flight was via Perth, it would take seven hours, 35 minutes. There is a direct flight from Melbourne on Wednesdays and Sundays that takes three hours, 55 minutes. If that flight was via Perth, it would take seven hours. There is also a direct flight from Sydney on Tuesdays and Saturdays that takes four hours, 10 minutes. If that flight was via Perth, it would take eight hours, 20 minutes. Basically, there will be a time saving on direct flights to and from Broome and those capital cities of four hours, which will create a hub. We also need an international link from, perhaps, Singapore to Broome; being able to fly directly into the north would provide a huge benefit in the way of international tourism and business.

The Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association conference will be held this week. I am sure many members have attended previous conferences. *Upstream: The International Oil and Gas Newspaper* is carrying an advertisement, placed by Australia's North West Tourism, Broome Chamber of Commerce, Broome International Airport, Broomestay Luxury Serviced Apartments, port of Broome and Toll Mermaid Logistics Broome, which shows a gentleman standing on the bow of a good fishing boat and states "You're in Broome on business" and there is a big fish jumping out of the water. The final caption states —

Why go to one of the most extraordinary places on earth and spend all your time working? Stay and enjoy world class fishing, resort accommodation ...

And on it goes. I draw that advertisement to the house's attention to show that business, tourism, and the oil and gas industry can all work together closely and beneficially.

The Brisbane service will tap into the rapid population growth that is occurring in Queensland, particularly south east Queensland. That service will benefit all in the sense that people from the Kimberley will be able to fly direct to the east coast if they wish to have a holiday away from their own area.

I am sure the service will grow with the development of the oil and gas industry in the precinct, and the key to the development of north west tourism will be an international link. I commend all those involved in it, and I think that it will eventually happen and we will then have a truly fantastic tourism industry in Western Australia.