

TOURISM — INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

129. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Tourism:

Mr Speaker —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse, I do not want to interrupt but your manager of opposition business is interjecting and so is the minister. I call them both to order.

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to the shocking statistics released overnight showing WA international visitor numbers are in freefall against national trends and the tourism industry's subsequent scathing attack on the government.

- (1) How much time does the CEO of the mega Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation dedicate to tourism?
- (2) What experience has the CEO had in selling holidays, hotels, events and aviation?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

- (1)–(2) The structure to which the member refers came into place as part of the machinery-of-government changes on 1 July last year. The statistics to which the member refers and apportsions all blame to the current government were accrued over a period of 12 months—from December 2016 to December 2017. Undeniably, international visitors do not turn around on a whim and go, “I know, let’s fly to Perth.” They make a decision over time. They have been influenced over or prior to that 12-month period when they chose to travel or not travel, by the campaigns and policies of the previous government.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse, you are on three calls.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The 2020 strategy was deemed to be an abject failure by the Auditor General when he tabled his report in September last year. He said it had failed, and we recognised that. This industry to whom the member refers—the mythical industry—is part of the task force that developed our two-year action plan, which we are about to launch. It has worked with us on creating the response to the diabolical numbers to which the member refers, which have been similarly poor for a number of years. We are responding to it. In the months between September and December last year, as a consequence of a campaign that was requested by the industry—we met at our first industry consortia that the Premier hosted in March last year —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr P. PAPALIA: — the numbers increased by 52 417.

Ms L. Mettam: You do not know that yet; the national numbers are not out yet.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse, I warned you. You are on three calls. Do you want to go home early?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Member, if there is a failure in strategy for international tourism, it is entirely the responsibility of the campaigns that were conducted prior to that 12 months. People do not decide in the course of the 12 months, when the data to which the member referred was being accrued—to fly to Perth as a consequence of our campaigns. If the member is trying to attribute any responsibility to the new structure, that came in on 1 July. For seven months of the 12 months, the previous government's structure that we inherited was in place.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr P. PAPALIA: We are fixing the mess that we inherited from the previous government.