

TOURISM WA — BUDGET CUTS

**222. Mr P. PAPALIA to the Minister for Tourism:**

I refer to the minister's claim in this place on 22 May that he was still in discussions over Tourism WA's remaining advertising budget, and to his admission in the media 15 days later that the remaining budget had been slashed by 30 per cent.

- (1) Was the minister aware of this massive 30 per cent cut to the Tourism WA budget when he told this house he was still in discussions over the cuts to advertising?
- (2) What does Tourism WA's modelling predict will be the further drop in tourist numbers this year as a result of the 30 per cent cut to its core advertising function?
- (3) What does Tourism WA's modelling predict will be the loss of income to Western Australia's tourism businesses for the remainder of this year as a result of this 30 per cent cut?

**Dr K.D. HAMES replied:**

- (1)–(3) I say right from the start that there is no 30 per cent cut. The tourism budget is \$70 million-odd and the amount of money we have had to give up is just under \$1 million. I do not know what happened to the member for Warnbro's maths, but less than \$1 million is clearly not 30 per cent.

**Mr P. Papalia:** The cut is from \$3.3 million.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Warnbro, you can have a supplementary question. Do not answer your own question, please!

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** What the member for Warnbro actually meant was different from what he said, but he likes to twist the way he says things to make them sound good and it backfired on him.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** The proposed reduction in budget for Tourism WA was something in the order of \$3.5 million, but we were allowed to continue with a significant amount of that—something in the order of \$2.5 million. Therefore, the final reduction —

**Mr P. Papalia** interjected.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** Even then, less than \$1 million is not that percentage of \$3.5 million.

**Mr P. Papalia:** What is it then?

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** It is about the mid-20s or high 20s—something in that order.

Several members interjected.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** That is not what the member for Warnbro said. That is why trying to be smart did not help him.

**Mr P. Papalia:** That is exactly what I said.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** He said a reduction in the budget when it was actually a percentage of the reduction, so the member has to get it right. Do not give me a hard time; I know some of the member's record in this house.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Please sit down for a minute.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Have you finished, member for Victoria Park? Thank you; I call you to order for the first time. The Hansard reporters would not have a hope of reporting the minister's answer, so can members please let the minister answer and can the minister please direct his answer to the Chair.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** Yes. It is just —

**Ms M.M. Quirk** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Girrawheen, you are going to be a "Gonski"; you are going to be gone from this place if you do not stop shouting out.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** The members continue to go on and again take the words I use out of context.

Several members interjected.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** I said to the media that most of the work that I do in health—the phone calls, the extra stuff, the pressures—tends to come during the day. That does not mean that I do not do work on tourism in the day. I have many meetings on tourism during the day. Most of the tourism things, particularly the functions, tend to be after.

**Mr P. Papalia** interjected.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** What is the member for Warnbro? Is he a part-time shadow minister because he does other things? Is the member for Kwinana a part-time shadow Minister for Health? Clearly not.

**Mr W.J. Johnston** interjected.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** It was not a stupid remark at all. I was asked how I do both together and they fit together very well because the events for tourism tend to be after hours, whereas the events for health tend to be in-hours. It is a very good balance. I have forgotten the question. Mr Speaker, you are nodding at me to hurry up, but I have forgotten the question he asked.

**Mr P. Papalia:** What is the modelling for the loss of tourist numbers?

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** The member talks about loss of tourist numbers, and when we debate the matter of public interest later, I will have figures on the gains in tourism that have been achieved since we have been in government.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, you have digressed now. Do you want to now just answer the question? Will members stop interjecting so we can get on with it?

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** The question was about the modelling for the loss of visitors. There is no loss of visitors and I am about to tell the member that there has been a significant increase in the number of visitors, particularly since I have been the minister. Visitors' spend is up 18.4 per cent. The number of visitors to Western Australia has grown by 15.8 per cent. Visitors' spend from the international market is up 20 per cent. We are part of a government that must have restraints around its spending. Members opposite always call for more spending and at the same time complain about debt levels. They cannot have it both ways. We have to be constrained in our spending and I have to do my job the same as any other minister to make sure that we are constrained. At the same time that we went down by that amount in the total spend, a lot of which is across international markets that have long-term advertising—remember that it was only six weeks—we went up significantly with our new “1001 Extraordinary Experiences” funding and an additional \$700 000 in marketing in both Western Australia and interstate to significantly grow our numbers.