

TOURISM — MANCHESTER UNITED

977. MR S.J. PRICE to the Minister for Tourism:

Thank you, Mr Speaker, and what a fabulous job you have done during question time today.

Several members interjected.

Mr S.J. PRICE: I refer to the McGowan Labor government's support for the tourism industry through its \$425 million investment in destination marketing and events, and its commitment to bringing world-class events to Western Australia, such as the 10-day visit by Manchester United. Can the minister outline to the house what this visit will mean for tourism in this state and the broader WA economy?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: And it will be a quick answer, too, won't it?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Have I got the call, Mr Speaker?

The SPEAKER: Yes, you have, but a quick answer.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Thank you for the call, Mr Speaker.

What a wonderful achievement—to attract the biggest sporting event this state will have ever seen. Manchester United is the biggest sporting club in the world. I think it is reported by Deloitte to have a turnover of \$1 billion a year—a football club—and to be valued at more than \$5 billion. They have assessed their fan base as around 659 million worldwide. That is an extraordinary reach, extraordinary numbers. It is a magnificent opportunity, getting them to this state, in the middle of winter, in the dead of winter.

A member interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: He knows more about it than I do!

In the dead of winter next year, Perth will be the sporting mecca of Australia, undeniably. That will be at a time of the year when, in the past, our hotels, hospitality outlets, venues, regional tourism destinations and tourism operators have struggled. In the middle of winter, when they are doing it tough, we will have a replay of the AFL grand final, the Bledisloe Cup, the second in the State of Origin NRL matches and the single biggest sporting event that this city has ever seen in the form of not only Manchester United—as the member for Cockburn must concede—but also its great rival, Leeds United.

Several members interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: He is not interested! Both teams are coming, but Manchester United is coming with its entire squad. It is not coming for one game or a couple of days and then skipping town; it is actually coming for a serious training camp as part of its pre-season. It is a real event. It is coming for a real training camp. There will be a range of opportunities for fans. From a tourism perspective, the most important thing—the Minister for Sport and Recreation will love the fact that Manchester United is here, of course, as will every other Western Australian —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! I am on my feet! Members, keep the noise down—we do not want to wake the Minister for Sport and Recreation up!

Several members interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I thought I was punching, but I can tell I am having a soporific effect on the other end of the chamber! I am sorry.

Look, not only will our young people have the opportunity to witness firsthand and get up close and personal to the best in the world and their heroes whom they aspire to emulate, but also this 10-day period will have multiple marketing opportunities in the form of a 1 000-person dinner, a golfing day with club legends and management, fan days, and open training sessions with both Leeds and Manchester United. This will enable Tourism WA to market packages with our hotels, tourism operators and all the venues to really attract visitation by people from all over the world, particularly on the eastern seaboard because Victoria is not getting this event. It wanted it, but it is not getting it. We are in the centre of the time zone. We have the opportunity to market to all of Asia. All of China is the same time zone, India is two and a half hours behind and Japan is an hour behind. We are at the centre. We are not isolated; we are in the middle of it all. For the first time, we will get the benefit of geographic location—next year, Perth will be the place to be. Then Optus Stadium will be the place to be, and I do not think people will have trouble finding Optus Stadium. I know the member is getting desperate when she attacks Manchester United coming to Perth by saying Optus Stadium may be confusing.

Several members interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is getting really desperate.

Several members interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I would say the sharks are circling —

The SPEAKER: Minister, I will sit you down! Minister, get to the end of it now, please.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I would normally say the sharks are circling, but a better metaphor is perhaps that the wolves are coming down from the hills to try to take the member for Vasse's job!