

BROOME PORT DREDGING

494. Mr D.T. PUNCH to the Minister for Tourism:

I refer to this government's decision to address issues at the Broome port, including a commitment of \$7 million to carry out dredging work that will provide all-tide access for cruise ships and in particular Carnival Australia's ships.

- (1) Why is this work needed?
- (2) When did Carnival Australia flag that this work was needed?
- (3) What does this mean for tourism and jobs in Western Australia?

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse!

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

- (1)–(3) I thank the member for Bunbury for his question and his keen interest in the benefits to be had for Bunbury and the surrounds through improved cruise ship access to not just Broome, but the entire state. The member asked why the work was required. The work required is relatively small—the \$7 million expenditure is significant, but relatively small in the scheme of things. There are essentially three obstructions in the channel and turning basin of the Broome port, two in the channel and —

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse, I call you to order for the second time.

Mr P. PAPALIA: There are two in the channel —

Mr P.C. Tinley interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Housing, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr P. PAPALIA: There are three obstructions—two in the channel and one in the turning basin. The extent of the work is relatively small. In effect, if the appropriate dredger is available, I am told it is only about two days' worth of work to enable 24/7 access to Broome port for all the ships that could currently go there and that might be able to access the port in the near future. That would enable significant increases to cruise shipping along the coast of Western Australia. When did we hear about the need for this?

Ms L. Mettam: In my opinion piece.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse, you might think you are funny, but you are not. I call you to order for the third time.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The member for Vasse suggested that her opinion piece, which was written about a month after I raised this issue in Parliament, is an interesting observation, but I raised it here in response to a question because one of the first briefing notes I read after becoming a minister raised the matter. It indicated that the previous Premier, the member for Cottesloe, received a letter from the CEO of Carnival Australia, Ann Sherry, in September 2016 indicating that unless action was taken to rectify deficiencies in port infrastructure in Western Australia, including Broome, Exmouth, Geraldton and Fremantle, Carnival Australia would withdraw its home porting of ships this coming year, 2018. It was of deep concern because attached to that briefing note was a commissioned report by ACIL Allen that indicated that were those shipping withdrawals to go ahead and the home porting withdrawn, it would result in ship visits to the region declining from 60 in the current year to 40 next year and subsequently dropping to 17 in the third year.

Mrs L.M. Harvey interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Scarborough!

Mr P. PAPALIA: The impact on the state would be —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! Minister for Police!

Mr P. PAPALIA: The impact on the state would be \$135 million in loss of revenue to regional ports. Of course, that was of significant enough concern to do something about it. I approached the Minister for Regional Development and the Minister for Transport. We got together and sorted the problem.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr P. PAPALIA: The Minister for Regional Development, the Minister for Transport and I, the Minister for Tourism, talked to each other and sorted the problem. What was the problem before that? The real question should be: when did the previous government hear about the problem? It was not in 2016. I am told by the board of Tourism Western Australia and the chair of the Forum Advocating Cultural and Eco-Tourism that this problem was known about five years ago. The previous government was told about this issue five years ago and it did nothing. I think the reason it did nothing was that, unlike our government, the former government's transport minister did not talk to its regional development minister because they were in different parts of the government, and the tourism minister did not talk to anyone.