

TOURISM — TWO-YEAR ACTION PLAN

479. Mr M. HUGHES to the Minister for Tourism:

My question may interest the member for Vasse. I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to supporting business and creating jobs for its record investment in tourism and the implementation of its two-year action plan. Can the minister advise the house how these efforts have attracted a record number of international holiday-makers to Western Australia, and can the minister outline what these record tourism figures have meant for the Western Australian economy?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I thank the member for his question and for his strong advocacy for tourism businesses in his electorate. I do not think I have ever been to Kalamunda as many times as I have in the last 12 months. The member is an incredibly strong advocate for the tourism industry in the hills. It makes a nice change for them.

The latest International Visitor Survey results confirm that Western Australia again leads the nation in growth in the number of international holiday-makers. There was an extraordinary 9.3 per cent growth to 493 100 international holiday-makers. It is the largest number of international holiday-makers that Western Australia has ever seen. It was the strongest year-on-year growth of all Australian states and territories. It was almost three times the national average of growth of holiday-makers coming to this state. It is most impressive when we contemplate that during the boom, under the previous government, leisure travel collapsed. There were no holiday-makers coming to Western Australia because people were coming for the boom. It was business related. It was people visiting friends and relatives associated with the boom, but our leisure market collapsed. We are growing it from scratch and we are leading the nation in that growth. That is a good thing.

International holiday-makers' spend is up 14.8 per cent to \$801 million—again, the highest international holiday-maker spend in Western Australian history. It confirms that the government's support for the tourism industry in the two-year action plan is on track and is working. Additional marketing activities and a strong events program is bringing more leisure visitors to fill our hotels, restaurants and cafes, and supporting tourism industries. This is what holiday-makers do. These are the people who stay in the hotels, not the people who visit friends and relatives.

Other sectors in international visitor measurements are a bit flat; they are a little down. Looking at where a lot of our visiting friends and relatives come from, for instance, the biggest proportion of any is the UK. There is a bit of concern in the UK at the moment about Brexit. I suspect that is playing on people's minds. People are probably thinking, "I won't go and visit uncle and aunty this year in Perth. I might wait and see whether Boris destroys the country!" I think that is what is going on. That may be having an impact. We have recognised that. We are about to double the international marketing spend over the next 12 months—\$12 million in the next 12 or 13 months. That is double what we normally spend selling Western Australia to the world. It will have an impact. We are doing it in the markets in which we can shift that immediate movement of visitors. Singapore and Malaysia are two big markets. The UK is another big market. Germany, the US, New Zealand, Hong Kong and Indonesia, those sorts of places, will all get a doubling of the spend. I look forward to future growth in the near term in all of our categories of international visitors. It is wonderful to see that the international holiday market in Western Australia is growing at the fastest rate in the nation.