

MARGARET RIVER GOURMET ESCAPE — EVENT MANAGEMENT

87. Mr P. PAPALIA to the Minister for Tourism:

I refer the minister to her recent claims regarding talking up WA and her government's achievements in relation to the state's events program, as well as the fact that she used \$2.58 million to fund the Margaret River Gourmet Escape last year.

- (1) Is it true that the event manager for the gourmet escape was the British company Brand Events?
- (2) Is it also true that the brands exclusively promoted at the event included San Pellegrino water from Italy; Aesop toiletries from Victoria; Lurpak butter from Denmark—the one in Europe!—Pimm's beverages from the UK; Dimattina Coffee from Italy; Huon Aquaculture products from Tasmania; Trumer Pils beer from California; and an almost unpronounceable Swedish cider!
- (3) I ask the minister —

The SPEAKER: Members! This is a culinary delight! Can I have some quiet, please.

Mr P. PAPALIA: How is spending state taxpayer dollars on a foreign events management company promoting foreign and interstate products talking up WA?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

- (1)–(3) Once again, members opposite cannot resist! We are talking about the Margaret River Gourmet Escape program, which is all about putting the “Margaret River” and “gourmet” brands on the map for the foodies and on the foodie calendar, and on developing that region as a gourmet destination. I do not know what the member for Warnbro is suggesting. Is he suggesting that we ban all importation of international products into Margaret River? I do not know whether that is the way export trade works, necessarily. I will say about the Margaret River Gourmet Escape that Brand Events is doing a terrific job promoting the Margaret River region. It has been a fantastic event for not only locals of the Margaret River region, but also people travelling from interstate and overseas destinations to attend the Margaret River Gourmet Escape at Margaret River.

The other really important aspect of the Margaret River Gourmet Escape that members need to be aware of is that, as a result of attracting international chefs such as Heston Blumenthal and Rick Stein to the Margaret River region, that region was exposed to more than 26 countries around the world. International visitors now look to Margaret River as the foodie capital of Western Australia. They will want to go there for their next holiday to see those extraordinary beaches, visit the vineyards and eat in those restaurants. They are going to come back next year. If members opposite cannot see the value in that, if they cannot find any aspect —

Several members interjected.

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

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: If members opposite cannot find any aspect of the Margaret River Gourmet Escape to talk up or cannot delight in what the south west region has to offer, I feel sad for them, and especially so for the member for Warnbro, who wants to be tourism minister for this state. I stand behind that event. It was a great event for Western Australians. It gave us international exposure.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: We now have international chefs fighting for an opportunity to come to that event. That is worth every cent we spent on it!