

**TOURISM — ABORIGINAL LANDS CAMPGROUNDS NETWORK — NORTH WEST**

*Statement by Minister for Tourism*

**MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Tourism)** [12.10 pm]: I wish to inform the house about an exciting initiative delivered by Tourism Western Australia to create a network of campgrounds on Aboriginal lands across the north west. Last week, I officially opened Western Australia's third Camping with Custodians site, and the first in the Pilbara region, at Peedamulla Station near Onslow. Peedamulla is a 220 000 hectare Aboriginal-owned pastoral station that extends from the North West Coastal Highway to the coast. The campground, which will operate from March to November each year, comprises 20 camping sites, five of which have power and water. It offers hot showers and flushing toilets, a barbeque shelter with gas-fired hotplates, a communal fire pit, and a lawn area.

The Camping with Custodians initiative is an Australia-first program that gives visitors the opportunity to camp on Aboriginal land with quality facilities, and to meet and mix with local Aboriginal people, knowing that the proceeds of their visit will remain in the community. For participating communities, Camping with Custodians helps improve the engagement of Indigenous Western Australians in the tourism industry, providing enterprise, jobs and training opportunities. It also helps Indigenous Western Australians showcase local lifestyle and culture, as well as develop and deliver a range of tourism offerings such as tours, art sales and story-telling activities.

Imintji campground and the Jarlarloo Riwi Mimbi campground in the Kimberley region were the first two Camping with Custodians sites, which I opened in July last year. A fourth site is currently being developed at Violet Valley in the East Kimberley. The new campground has put Peedamulla on the tourist map and created a new destination for self-drive visitors passing through the Pilbara. It is now one of 20 businesses in the state government's Aboriginal tourism development program, administered by the Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council, which is receiving government support to help strengthen its operations, marketing and customer service delivery.

Tourism WA research shows that 78 per cent of visitors to Western Australia in 2016–17 expressed an interest in Aboriginal tourism; however, only 21 per cent experienced it. There is a great opportunity to capitalise on the strong interest in Aboriginal tourism, and the state government is working on a number of initiatives, including expanding Camping with Custodians, to help grow the sector in the state. Aboriginal tourism is an economic driver, currently contributing \$43.8 million to the Western Australian economy and supporting 339 full-time equivalent jobs. The McGowan government is committed to maximising the sector's potential and it is an important part of our plan to create jobs, develop business opportunities and diversify the economy.