

CRUISE SHIP FACILITIES — INVESTMENT

**160. Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE to the Minister for Tourism:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to growing WA tourism, attracting more cruise ships to WA and its decisive action to fix issues at WA's ports, particularly Broome port.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how these upgrades have led to an historic investment in WA by Princess Cruises?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house what this investment means for the state's economy and WA jobs?

**Mr P. PAPALIA replied:**

I can, member, and I thank her for the question.

- (1)–(2) The story of cruise ships in Western Australia is the tale of two governments, really. One of the very first briefing notes I read in coming to office in March last year was a very clear note from a Tourism Western Australia specialist advising me that Carnival Australia was going to withdraw home porting of cruise ships from 2018. That was not a question or potentially a threat. It had notified Tourism WA that it was going to withdraw, which would have resulted in an immediate reduction in port visits to Western Australia by two-thirds. At that stage, that would have meant 40 port visits a year dropped down to 20 visits, which would have put us back five years. This was concerning. I sought further information about what had led to this position. I received a copy of a letter that had been sent to the previous Premier dated 26 September 2016, notifying the former government that unless infrastructure shortfalls were rectified at a number of ports around Western Australia, Carnival Australia would withdraw its home porting in Western Australia. That was a letter dated 26 September 2016 sent to the then Premier; Minister for Tourism, ending with a request for meetings between the CEO, Ann Sherry, or alternatively, Paul Mifsud, the director of port operations, and Sandy Olsen, vice president of corporate affairs, with the Premier himself or his office. Those meetings never happened with the Premier. What we know happened subsequently in December 2016 is that the parliamentary secretary for tourism was sent to meet with Carnival Australia and made no commitments on behalf of the government. We know that on 30 November 2016, the then Leader of the Opposition and Hon Darren West, that tremendous champion for the regions of Western Australia, went to Geraldton and committed that in the event that WA Labor won government we would provide shore-side tensioning units in Geraldton.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** If members want to confirm that story, they can go to the Everything Geraldton website and see that report from 30 November.

**Mr I.C. Blayney** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Geraldton, I call you to order for the first time.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** What happened from the former government? What was there from the government of the day? There was not a thing until the election campaign. In the course of the election campaign, as detailed in the briefing note I received on 31 January 2017, the then government finally matched Labor's commitment to provide shore-side tensioning units should it win the election. A forlorn promise, because the former government was never going to win that election, and it did not. We took action. The moment I received this briefing note, I brought it to the attention of cabinet and the jobs and economic development subcommittee of cabinet and we sought funding to solve the problems. There was \$1 million immediately delivered to Geraldton to get the shore-side tensioning units in accordance with our commitment. There was \$7 million —

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** You couldn't even lie straight in bed.

*Withdrawal of Remark*

**The SPEAKER:** You will redraw that remark.

**Mr I.C. BLAYNEY:** I withdraw.

**The SPEAKER:** I call you to order for the second time, member for Geraldton—busy day!

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** There was \$7 million dedicated to the dredging of the Broome harbour and making it a 24/7 port. Several members interjected.

**Extract from *Hansard***

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 20 March 2018]

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Mrs Robyn Clarke; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Ian Blayney

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**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Subsequently, \$3 million has been allocated to aesthetic upgrades to the Fremantle Passenger Terminal, and what do we see? Not only has Carnival Australia committed to returning shipping to Western Australia, not only has it committed to home porting, it has committed to a 100 per cent increase in port visit days, regional port visits and cruising days in Western Australia. Instead of complaining about it, instead of whingeing about it, the opposition should be applauding it, because it did nothing in government.