

AUSTRALIAN SURF LIFE SAVING CHAMPIONSHIPS

310. Mr A. KRSTICEVIC to the Minister for Tourism:

I was privileged to attend the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships hosted at Scarborough Beach near my electorate of Carine. Can the minister please inform the house of the success of this event and how events such as this fit into the Liberal–National government’s tourism strategy for the state?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

I thank the member for Carine for his question and, indeed, his strong, ongoing support for events such as these held at beautiful Scarborough Beach. Participation events are one of the seven pillars of the government’s tourism strategy, and I am delighted that Western Australia hosted the 2014 Australian Surf Life Saving Championships from 31 March to 6 April. That event is also known as the Aussies. It is one of the biggest multidiscipline events in the world, rivalling the Commonwealth Games in terms of athlete numbers. We had over 5 000 competitors in the event, from 190 surf lifesaving clubs right across Australia. It is estimated that 11 000 interstate athletes, organisers and spectators came to Western Australia to participate in this event. That event has delivered a significant return to our economy, and it has certainly added a bucketload of vibrancy into our community.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: They stayed in all types of accommodation, member for Girrawheen.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I always find it amusing when I see the ignorance from those opposite about the importance of events in Western Australia in attracting tourism, adding to vibrancy and creating opportunities for Western Australians to compete in the most beautiful landscape settings in the world. But I love it. I love events. They are an important part of our strategy.

Tourism WA has commissioned research into the event’s media and economic value, and I expect that these results will be available within the next few weeks. Members may be interested to know that free wi-fi was installed along Scarborough Beach prior to the commencement of the Aussies. We also had the unveiling of a new bronze statue of two surf lifesavers, titled *Watch Over You*. That statue was commissioned by the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority as part of the works that are occurring at Scarborough. There is a high level of excitement about the revitalisation of the Scarborough beachfront, courtesy of a \$30 million commitment from this government, combined with a \$30 million commitment from the City of Stirling. I expect that in future we will see more of those sorts of events at the Scarborough beachfront for Western Australians and tourists from right across Australia and overseas to enjoy.

While I am on my feet and talking about the events program in Western Australia, I would like to make a correction to a statement that I made in a brief ministerial statement on 3 April about our very successful Margaret River Gourmet Escape. In that statement, I said that 10 171 Western Australians attended, generating 39 103 nights, at an average length of stay of 3.8 nights, with an average daily spend of \$255. What I should have said is that a total of 10 171 people attended from outside the region, generating 39 103 nights, at an average length of stay of 3.8 nights, with an average daily spend of \$255.

That said, with the Margaret River Gourmet Escape, the Aussies and the 95 or so events that this government is sponsoring right across the state, I expect to see continued optimism in our tourism sector as Western Australians, international visitors and interstate tourists alike come here to enjoy our extraordinary destinations.