

LUCKY BAY CAMPGROUND

**746. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Tourism:**

I refer to comments the minister made in *The Esperance Express* on the reopening of the Lucky Bay campground that —

“Attracting more people, more often to regional Western Australia is an important focus in Tourism WA’s Two-Year Action Plan and this upgrade at Lucky Bay will help us achieve that goal.”

- (1) How does the recent hike in camping fees across 32 of the state’s national parks, with Lucky Bay copping one of the biggest increases at 36 per cent, attract more people to regional Western Australia?
- (2) Did the Minister for Environment consult the Minister for Tourism and his agencies ahead of jacking up these prices?

**Mr P. PAPALIA replied:**

I thank the member for his question.

- (1)–(2) The member will be happy to know that in the last 12 months to the end of June this year, Esperance saw a 22 per cent increase in international visitors. That is just Esperance; that is not Australia’s golden outback region, which also saw extraordinary growth thanks partly to the affordable flights that we now have in place, which make it easier for people to book early and get an affordable flight from Perth down to Esperance. I think those flights are available four times a day. They obviously have been very successful and well taken up. I have been down there during the Esperance Cup. You cannot get a room down there at that time of the year; the place is humming. It has been promoted heavily, not just by Tourism Western Australia —

**Mr R.S. Love** interjected.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** The member has asked a question about another portfolio, so I am talking about tourism, which is my portfolio. If the member is asking about the environment minister and fees for parks, that is not my portfolio. I have an observation to make, and that is that Esperance is humming with regard to tourism. It is getting far more visitors than it ever got under the previous government, because we know that in 2018–19 we saw the biggest number of visitors from outside the state to Western Australia in history, with the biggest spend in history. A lot of that is going down to Esperance. It is doing very well. With regard to the costs to which the member referred, it is not my responsibility and not my portfolio. Nevertheless, as part of cabinet, we obviously see documentation around matters of this nature. As I understand it, the fees are to cover costs of operation. That is a reasonable thing. Fees necessary to cover the costs of operation are reasonable, because otherwise that money would be coming from somewhere else—maybe taxes, or maybe additional fees associated with people who are not going to the park. It seems reasonable to me that the people who access the park pay for that. Covering costs, on behalf of taxpayers, also seems a reasonable thing.