

TOURISM — VISITOR NUMBERS

424. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Tourism:

I refer to the latest Tourism Research Australia figures that show a massive drop in visitor spend in WA of \$140 million in the last year and a decrease in regional trip expenditure of 8.9 per cent against a five per cent national increase. Why has the minister cut \$6 million out of destination development funding going forward and why did he rip \$7 million out of last year's events budget to invest in projects such as tourism transport initiatives?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I might have to interpret the last bit of the question for the purposes of enlightening the house. I think the last part of the question referred to the McGowan government's action to dredge Broome harbour and open up 24/7 access for large cruise ships.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse!

Mr P. PAPALIA: For seven years under the Barnett government, Broome port sought to have three obstructions removed from its harbour so that cruise ships could access it 24/7. No, for seven years —

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse, you can ask a question and you have a chance for a supplementary question.

Mr P. PAPALIA: For seven years, it got no interest at all from the Barnett government, despite the fact that Carnival Australia wrote to the former Premier in September 2016 indicating that it was going to withdraw its home port from Western Australia if it was not done. What happened when we took office? When I spoke to the CEO of Carnival Australia, the biggest operator of cruise ships in Western Australia, she said, "We're pulling out." I said, "Please, don't do that. Tell me what we have to do to fix it." She said, "Dredge Broome harbour, shore-side tensioning in Geraldton and a little bit of work in Fremantle." What have the Minister for Transport, the Minister for Regional Development and Tourism WA done? The McGowan government has done all three of those things, and what will happen next year? As a consequence, in this cruise year there will be a 100 per cent increase in the number of cruise days and cruise passengers to Western Australia. Many thousands of them will come to WA from the east coast and from around the world to get on a cruise ship and go out to regional ports, which will generate an economy in tourism in the regions. It is a fantastic initiative that should have happened eight years ago, but we are doing it. We are getting on with it. At the first available opportunity, we are fixing that.

It is incredible to see the member for Vasse take a break from writing opinion pieces about fish and come into this place on the one day when we have finally seen some green shoots with interstate visitation and have finally seen a return of the interstate holiday market to Western Australia and what does she do? She talks down the Western Australian industry.

Mr D.A. Templeman: It's un-Australian! It's anti-WA!

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is un-Western Australian. I remember the former member for Cottesloe calling us un-Western Australian. I thought that was hilarious.

I inform the house, and as I have said on a number of occasions in recent times, that right now the government and Tourism WA are in negotiations with foreign airlines to try to entice them to fly to Western Australia. For every other state, China is the number one or two source of visitors. In Western Australia, it is sixth. When I went to China, I was the first WA tourism minister there since 2011. When I went to Japan, I was the first WA tourism minister there since 2012.

Point of Order

Mr D.T. REDMAN: This is the second question that this minister has answered and he has gone on for well over five minutes on each answer. I know it was a question from the opposition, but I ask you to make him make his answers sharper.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! I just want to hear the member say it again, please, because everyone was shouting.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: This is the second question that this minister has answered. He is burning up a lot of question time. I recognise it is a question from the opposition, but it is important that we have sharp responses from ministers so that we can get through a full complement of questions during question time.

Mr M.P. Murray interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Sport and Recreation, I call you to order.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! Everyone will get an equal amount of time for questions; I will make sure of that. I am sure the minister will get to the end of his answer.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr P. PAPALIA: The point I was making about international flights is that it is sensitive. We have to try hard. No effort was made by the former government. Right now, telling the world that Western Australia is not a good destination is not going to help.

Mr M. HUGHES: Mr Speaker —

Ms L. METTAM: A supplementary —

The SPEAKER: The member for Kalamunda. It is too late, member for Vasse. I waited and you did not get up, so I gave the call. You got the call early before.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Treasurer, I call you to order for the first time.

Point of Order

Mr D.T. REDMAN: It is convention that almost all of the time we get a supplementary question. I think it is only reasonable that the member gets it. I draw your attention to —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! Thank you. I sat and I waited, and the member was writing on a sheet of paper —

Ms L. Mettam: No, I wasn't. I don't have a pen.

The SPEAKER: You were looking at a bit of paper. I waited a couple of seconds, but you did not stand and I called the member, and I call him now. The member for Kalamunda.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Further to the point of order, yesterday during the matter of public interest, there was an issue in and around the division when you had made the call on the number of people —

The SPEAKER: Sit down, member; you are going very close to the line.