

TOURISM — ACTION PLAN

**423. Mr D.T. PUNCH to the Minister for Tourism:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's unprecedented \$425 million investment in tourism and its two-year action plan, which aims to reverse the eight and a half years of neglect of tourism by the previous Liberal–National government.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Okay. Members, I will hear it in silence. Start again, member for Bunbury.

**Mr D.T. PUNCH:** I refer to the McGowan Labor government's unprecedented \$425 million investment in tourism and its two-year —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** I cannot say it any clearer than this—no interjections when someone is asking a question. Member for North West Central, I call you to order for the first time.

**Mr D.T. PUNCH:** I refer to the McGowan Labor government's unprecedented \$425 million investment in tourism and its two-year action plan, which aims to reverse the eight and a half years of neglect of tourism by the previous Liberal–National government. Can the minister update the house on this plan, including the unprecedented partnership with Qantas to make flights to Broome more affordable?

**Mr P. PAPALIA replied:**

On the morning on which there is a report about, finally, an increase in interstate visitation to Western Australia, it is a pleasure to answer that question, member for Bunbury. I appreciate, member, after two years, the first signs of green shoots in recovering from the eight and a half years of neglect of the leisure market and the holiday market, which had collapsed under the Barnett government. We are finally starting to see some return, as we are right across the economy in Western Australia.

**Ms L. Mettam** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Vasse!

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Every sector almost is in a state of recovery as a consequence of the McGowan government taking office. That is a wonderful thing.

We have already delivered on our commitment that we made more than 11 months before the election, as the member is fully aware, to the tourism sector to commit \$425 million over five years, and, more importantly, \$85 million a year to destination marketing and events funding. Every single year, consistently into the forward estimates, that is empowering and enabling a flexible use of that money by Tourism WA, allowing the taxpayers' dollar to be magnified and used more effectively, because we gave certainty to the agency. It is now able to do deals well beyond the current year and into the future. Under the Barnett government, everyone knows it did not believe in the forward estimates, and funding for tourism always went for two years and then plummeted by 50 per cent, or more —

**Mrs L.M. Harvey** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Scarborough!

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** It then plummeted by 50 per cent, or more, in the third year of the out years and in the fourth year, constraining Tourism WA. We fixed that in the first budget. The Treasurer delivered in September on that promise. We gave flexibility to Tourism WA to be far more effective in approaching opportunities, particularly on the east coast. We re-established a marketing presence, a marketing office, which was shut seven years ago on the east coast by the Barnett government. They did not feel they had to reach out to the eastern states. They did not feel that we actually had to sell ourselves on the east coast. They were just sitting back, sleeping and snoozing through the boom, letting it all happen as a consequence of the mining boom. We have developed a tourism action plan in direct consultation with the Tourism Council Western Australia. Evan Hall and the Tourism Council and Bradley Woods and the Australian Hotels Association worked with Tourism WA and developed a two-year action plan to address the need to drive visitation to the state from international and interstate markets. That was rolled out only in March. It will be a long task to repair the damage. It will take a while to change the reputation —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** It will take a long time to fix the mess that we inherited. As in so many other sectors —

**Dr M.D. Nahan** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition, I call you to order for the third time.

**Ms L. Mettam** interjected.

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

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** The two-year action plan developed with and by industry, and owned by industry in Western Australia, is now in play. It has a number of focus elements to it. Clearly, in international tourism, we are focused on making ourselves the western gateway. We are in negotiations right now with Chinese airlines for direct flights from Shanghai and with Japanese airlines for direct flights from Tokyo, and we will be looking at India to try to get direct flights there. That is international. We will try to grow the other ones that we currently have, but those are a big focus.

**Mr V.A. Catania** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for North West Central!

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** With the interstate markets, we have the job of trying to —

**Mr V.A. Catania** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for North West Central, I call you to order for the second time.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** The international markets are drawing people into the state and getting them out to the regions. That is obviously part of the action plan. Beyond that, with the interstate markets, we are focused on using the newly re-established eastern coast marketing agency to change the reputation that Western Australia accrued during the boom of being expensive and difficult to being affordable and quality. Hopefully, that is having some effect right now. We have doubled the cruise shipping visits for next year through investment in infrastructure. In the next cruising year, there will be a 100 per cent increase in the number of port visits and cruising visitors to Western Australia. In the regions, whilst the former government sat on its hands —

**Mr D.T. Redman** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Warren–Blackwood, I call you to order for the first time. Minister, you will be getting to the end.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I am wrapping it up. Mr Speaker, I know you are interested in the regions.

**The SPEAKER:** Very quickly, I am interested.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** The former government sat on its hands and watched regional airfares soar during the boom and did nothing to assist regional towns. We initiated an inquiry, which has resulted in a £10 deal by Qantas. Everyone knows that this is the first government in history to address the exorbitant airfares to Broome and open up the Kimberley with an affordable airline package, with 29 400 affordable seats to the regions over the next 12 months. Broome is in the regions, member. I know you do not think anything outside a Nationals seat is in the regions, but it is.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, you will talk through the Chair and you will wind this up quickly, please.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I look forward to seeing the people of Perth change their behaviour and shift from going to Bali and choose to go to the Western Australian regions on their holidays thanks to our affordable deal with Qantas.