

TOURISM — TWO-YEAR ACTION PLAN

598. Mr S.A. MILLMAN to the Minister for Tourism:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to supporting small businesses and creating jobs through its record investment in tourism and the implementation of its two-year action plan. Can the minister advise the house how this government's efforts have attracted a record number of holiday-makers to Western Australia and can the minister outline to the house what this record number of tourists has meant for the WA economy?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I thank the member for his well-delivered question! We could never get enough good numbers around tourism, but I was very happy to hear other good news about tourism in the member's electorate—the opening of a new wine bar and restaurant, Le Rebelle. It is great to see a new small business opening on Beaufort Street under the much more flexible and supportive regime that the McGowan government implemented a couple of years ago. Speaking of numbers, that accords with the fact there are now more small businesses in Western Australia than there were last year and the year before and the year before that, all the way back to 2014, according to data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. I thank the member for his optimism—that is a good thing. There is not much of it from the other side of the chamber.

With respect to tourism numbers, I was delighted to see payback returned for the taxpayers of Western Australia—a return in the form of visitor numbers in direct response to the two-year action plan that was launched a little over a year ago, in 2018. The latest data for the 12 months to March this year confirmed that, looking at the National Visitor Survey and the International Visitor Survey combined, there were a record-breaking 2.66 million out-of-state visitors to Western Australia up until the year ending March 2019. Spending by these visitors increased by 7.6 per cent to \$3.9 billion. That is another record spend. WA had 11.1 million international and domestic overnight visitors, who, together with daytrippers, spent \$10.1 billion in the state. Good news for the National Party—which is always in search of good news; it does not get much inside its own ranks!—46 per cent of that record spend was in the regions. That is an extraordinary return.

The survey showed that growing numbers of Western Australians are holidaying at home, too. It is not our main focus because I really want to grow outside visitation—the visitors from outside the state so we get an added economy; new people coming in and spending money. Local people are holidaying at home in record numbers. That figure increased by 16.3 per cent to 3.6 million, and their spend was up 21.7 per cent to \$2.2 billion. Western Australians are responding to holidaying at home, the road trip campaign and other campaigns like the affordable flights to Broome, Exmouth, Albany, Esperance, Monkey Mia and Carnarvon, and it is working. All of the state's regions have recorded, year on year, increases in domestic overnight visitors. The two-year action plan is working. There is more to be done. The good news is that, on 1 September, as part of the two-year action plan to go after new direct routes, All Nippon Airways will commence flights seven days a week for the really valuable Japanese tourism market. It is a great opportunity that was lost under the previous government. I do not know whether the Leader of the Opposition was the minister then, but maybe. In the six and a half years during which I have had responsibility for talking about tourism on behalf of the Western Australian Labor Party, I have had six opponents. I now have a new critic of tourism, a new pessimist, a new person responsible for talking down tourism and attacking the City of Perth. I am waiting for her question, but I do not expect her to be there long; I expect there to be a leadership change at the end of the year, and we might be up to number seven.