

ROTTNEST ISLAND — BOOKING SYSTEM

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

Can I start by extending our condolences to the Premier and his family, on behalf of the Parliamentary Liberal Party. Given the millions of taxpayers' dollars spent to promote Rottnest Island tourism, including attracting Roger Federer, can the minister explain how he has not managed to fix the Rottnest Island booking system, which is still broken after 53 days? Can the minister confirm that this situation is an embarrassing joke by the standards of international tourism?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I thank the member for the question. I am ropeable about the state of Rottnest Island's information technology that we inherited from the member's government. It is appalling!

Several members interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Does the member know why I am so angry? It is because of the fantastic job that the McGowan government has been doing to reinvigorate the Western Australian population's love affair with Rottnest Island!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! Through the Chair, minister.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Scarborough, do you realise you are on three calls? The next one will be the last one.

Mr P. PAPALIA: When we took office, it became evident that Rottnest had been languishing under the Barnett regime. I heard about a project proposal that had waited for seven years for a decision by a minister. That was the proposal for the Rottnest Lodge resort, which everyone now knows is going ahead. The Pinky's Beach glamping resort proposal sat in the in-tray for four years, which I think was about four ministers' worth. It was not waiting for a decision, but to hear whether the Rottnest Island Authority would let the project go ahead. When I got the job, I said to the executive director of Rottnest Island Authority, "I don't care whether the projects are approved; just give them an answer." Within six months, both those projects had a pathway forward. We now know that the glamping resort will be open by December and, by the end of next year, the Rottnest Lodge will be a resort, the scale of which has never been seen on Rottnest. The investment is going ahead. That is why I am disappointed. In October, we authorised a third ferry service and, the day the ferry service commenced, we dropped the access fee by 30 per cent for people right across Western Australia to get to Rottnest Island. That massively increased visitation numbers to the island. In that seven months until the end of the financial year, the number of visitors increased to such an extent that visitor numbers to the island for the entire year improved by 14 per cent. That was entirely down to the McGowan government's decisions and actions.

So of course I am angry and disappointed that the system we inherited for booking people through to the island's accommodation, which is operated by Oracle, was known to have been inadequate since 2016. The Rottnest Island Authority had been working to improve the system and, from the start of this year, was aware that the online accommodation booking system would no longer be compliant with payment card industry data security standards. Payment processes would not be able to work with the old legacy system that was inherited from the previous government. The Rottnest Island Authority negotiated with both Oracle and the payment system providers to ensure there would not be a gap. Obviously, that failed. Right now, it is disappointing because there has to be a workaround so they are doing telephone bookings. I am told that the system will be repaired by next week. Ultimately, the reason that the system fell over is that, as far back as 2016, it was known it would become inadequate. It needed repair or replacement and nothing was done. Perhaps the member should ask my predecessor why the system is down, because he is responsible.