

TOURISM — JAPAN–PERTH DIRECT FLIGHTS

**711. Mr R.R. WHITBY to the Minister for Tourism:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's achievement in securing direct flights from Tokyo, which the minister was last week vigorously and enthusiastically promoting in Japan.

- (1) Can the minister advise the house how those in Japan have responded to this job-creating, tourism-boosting initiative?
- (2) Can the minister outline to the house how these direct flights will also boost export opportunities for Western Australia's farmers and producers?

**Mr P. PAPALIA replied:**

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for his question. Yes, I can, member. I refer to the inaugural All Nippon Airways flight from Tokyo to Perth, which arrived on Sunday evening and carried with it all manner of opportunities for Western Australia, apart from around 187 or so Japanese tourists and visitors. It was an extraordinary feat. I am very proud of what the government did to achieve this flight, because it was not going to happen. When we took office, a Western Australian tourism minister had not visited Japan since 2012, despite the fact that flights ended in 2011. At that time, the direct flights were only three times a week, with Qantas.

In November 2017, the Premier led a delegation to Japan and I went with a team from Tourism Australia, Tourism WA and Perth Airport. We met with ANA and Japan Airlines at the time, and quickly identified that ANA was a prospective partner. A couple of weeks later we went back and delivered an offer to that airline, initiating the discussions that resulted in it, within two years, commencing a seven-day-a-week service. It is anticipated that it will bring an additional 76 000 Japanese visitors to Western Australia over the next three years. Noting that there are only 29 000 year at the moment, that is almost a doubling annually, but I think those estimates are conservative. If they are achieved, it will introduce an additional \$175 million of economic activity to Western Australia, but I think we will exceed that. It is an extraordinary change—a quantum leap—in the connection between Western Australia and Japan, and the opportunity for not just tourism but also agriculture and other exports.

We were in Japan last week where there were all manner of promotions. Nissy, the Japanese pop star, is out there selling, I am told, to young women who are very fond of Nissy and now see that there are a lot of great places to visit in Western Australia, like the Pinnacles, Kings Park, Rottnest Island, Fremantle and the Swan Valley.

Apart from visitors coming this way, there were people going the other way. That is great for Japan. I am not that interested or excited about it, but it is important for the airline. It is nice that some people in Western Australia who enjoy skiing and snowboarding will enjoy the flight later in the year. But, the first flight going the other way also carried 2.5 tonnes of WA-grown premium avocados. If members know anything about Japan, they would know that over the last five years avocado consumption has grown dramatically every single year and they are getting them mostly from Mexico—and they are second rate by comparison with ours. High-quality avocados are going to Japan underneath the wings —

Several members interjected.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Stop heckling!

There was also 2.6 tonnes of cut flowers. It is a big flower export opportunity, because premium-quality fresh flowers have to go by aircraft. There was also 1.5 tonnes of chilled meat. There will be opportunities for things like black truffles, and I understand that the second aircraft may even be taking some lobster if they have not all gone to China. It is a great thing. It is great news for WA tourism. It is great news for WA agriculture and aquaculture exports. It is a fantastic outcome for Western Australia and I look forward to achieving further victories on new direct flights from other markets.