

WINE INDUSTRY — CHINA — TOURISM

256. Ms E.J. KELSIE to the Minister for Regional Development:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to providing long-term prosperity for regional Western Australians.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how this government is supporting Western Australia's wine industry to re-establish trade relations with China following its recent removal of wine import tariffs?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this support builds on other initiatives benefiting the economies in the south west and great southern, including the new direct flights from Sydney?

The SPEAKER: The Minister for Regional Development—in demand today!

Mr D.T. PUNCH replied:

Yes! I thank the member for her question, and I have got to say that I do not think there is a single person in Warren–Blackwood that the member has not met and spoken to. Wherever I go into the Warren–Blackwood the member's name comes up as advocating for her region and strongly for the wine industry.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.T. PUNCH: In moderation!

- (1)–(2) On Friday last week, I was pleased to join the Premier and the member at Xanadu Wines in Margaret River for a very important announcement about the wine industry's re-engagement with China. As we know, the wine industry, along with other key sectors, suffered greatly following the trade disputes with China triggered by the previous federal government. Our government is providing new additional funding of \$500 000 to assist WA wine exporters to re-engage with the Chinese market, which prior to the introduction of tariffs was WA's largest overseas wine market, representing 38 per cent of wine exports. That is 2.1 million litres of wine exports to China in 2019–20, valued at \$18.3 million. It was very, very significant. The WA wine industry is estimated to be worth \$729 million and generates enormous economic opportunity and jobs for our regional communities. It is a huge job creator for our state, with 6 000 people employed statewide.

This investment will support trade, marketing and promotions, delegations to and from China, and WA's participation in the region's premier wine and spirits trade expositions like Vinexpo Asia in Hong Kong in May 2024 and ProWine in Shanghai in November 2024. It will also assist exporters with costs for re-engaging China-based retailers and distributors, and recommencing supply chains, including bottling, packaging and shipping costs. The wine industry has been suffering greatly. This is a real kick start to help them along.

We know the partnership has been working because, although export values to 30 June 2023 across Australia demonstrated significant decline, WA has been less affected than other jurisdictions because of our partnership with WA Wines, which contributed \$3 million to match the state's \$3 million to really drive over the last three years new opportunities for the wine sector. We are also looking at east coast sales.

The trade issues that we had impacted wines, the lobster industry and Bali. Who had the farmers' and fishers' backs during that time? It was our government. It was not the federal Liberal–National government, and I did not hear much from opposition members. It was our government supporting them then and it is our government supporting them now.

It is a pity that the Treasurer; Minister for Tourism has left because she knows the value of tourism to our wine industry—she knows the value of the contribution that tourism makes to cellar-door wine sales, which is one of the key aspects of the wine industry. For some winemakers up to 70 per cent of sales are direct to customers, and tourism plays a big role in that. What better way to boost tourism numbers through the south west and great southern than a plane full of tourists from the east coast, assisting those east coast visitors, with their cash flow, to sample our very, very fine premium wines. Following the success of Jetstar's Melbourne to Busselton service, which commenced in April 2022, a new Jetstar service operates between Sydney and Busselton and is a very welcome boost. I want to thank our hardworking Minister for Tourism, who is passionate about Western Australia and regional Western Australia, for her work in helping to get those new routes opened up. The service had its inaugural flight on 26 March and will bring more than 28 000 additional inbound seats to the state through its thrice-weekly service. That will be a valuable boost to tourism and it will certainly help our wine sector, as it relies on those cellar door sales. Reduced travel time from Sydney will encourage more visitors to

conveniently access the south west. This is significant state government support. It has paved the way for the development of the Busselton Margaret River Airport and the establishment of Jetstar's direct east coast connections. Through the South West Development Commission and Tourism WA, the Cook government will continue to work closely with the City of Busselton to secure airline services into the future. That is the value of collaboration; that is what this government stands for. We have the back of regional WA, we have the back of our wine history and we will support it into the future.

The SPEAKER: The member for North West Central with the last question.