

ULTIMATE FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

**588. Mr S.N. AUBREY to the Minister for Tourism:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to diversifying the state's economy, growing tourism and attracting world-class events to Western Australia.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house what this government's success in securing a major Ultimate Fighting Championship event will mean for local businesses?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house of how the government is ensuring that WA will continue to be a sought after destination for major events to support local jobs, local businesses and the Western Australian economy?

**Mr R.H. COOK replied:**

I thank the member for the question.

- (1)–(2) Recently I had the pleasure of joining Australia's UFC featherweight champion, Alexander Volkanovski, and Parliament's own UFC champion, Hon Kyle McGinn, to announce that on 12 February next year, around 13 000 spectators will watch UFC 284 at RAC Arena, with millions more watching the live broadcast, streamed to 180 countries around the world. This event is expected to attract thousands of visitors from interstate in a major economic boost to fill hotel rooms and to drive economic activity and jobs for local tourism and hospitality businesses. I know that UFC may not be everyone's cup of tea, but there are at least 350 000 fans in Western Australia, including the Minister for Police and his kids, and many millions across the country. In 2018, the previous iteration, UFC 2021, injected \$5.3 million into the WA visitor economy; 30 per cent of tickets sold to that event were for visitors from interstate. These visitors stayed an average of three nights in the city and spent around \$444 on each day of their visit. This really underpins the importance of these sorts of events. It means more opportunities for owners of cafes, bars and hotels. It means increased opportunities for jobs in our great hospitality sector and a big boost for our tourism operators.

The UFC will be another major event success for Perth, following the enviable list of tourism success stories such as the Margaret River Pro, the National Rugby League State of Origin match, the ICON Festival of International Football, the Super Netball grand final and the Wallabies rugby union international, not to mention the upcoming International Cricket Council T20 Cricket World Cup and the Women's Cricket World Cup matches in 2023. It is not always elite sports that get a mention. Today I went to the six-month milestone for the World Transplant Games, which will occur between 15 and 21 April 2023, bringing over 2 000 competitors from 60 countries across the world. It will not only mean great tourism and economic opportunities for Western Australia, but also highlight the importance of organ donation and inspire the community, which will see these great people, organ transplant recipients, doing their best.

The range and breadth of the major events strategy is reaping rewards for local businesses while putting Perth and Western Australia on the global map of must-see destinations. The tourism workforce development program and the Discover the Other Side campaign are some of the measures that the McGowan government is taking to ensure that we continue to drive up the availability of the tourism and hospitality workforces. From the Margaret River Pro in the south west to Dambo's *Giants of Mandurah* in the Peel to the total solar eclipse in the Gascoyne and Pilbara and everything in between, thanks to the McGowan government, our tourism strategy is putting the entire state on display. These are big events. They are great events and they are ones that not only put Western Australia on the global map, but also continue to drive economic growth and prosperity for everyone involved in the great tourism and hospitality industries.