

CORONAVIRUS — EVENTS INDUSTRY — SUPPORT

**284. Mr Y. MUBARAKAI to the Minister for Culture and the Arts:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitments to supporting Western Australia's events industry throughout the pandemic. Can the minister update the house on the support this government has provided to the industry and how this industry is recovering from the impacts of COVID-19?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:**

I thank the member for Jandakot for his question and for his deep interest in all things cultural, and particularly, of course, our vibrant arts sector. The member has asked a very good question, because I think it is important to place on the record that this government has not only provided an environment in which it can deal with the pandemic well, but also has targeted responses to challenging times. There is no doubt that the events industry has been challenged over the COVID period. The member might be aware that as part of the government's strong financial focus and management, it has been able to deliver significant funds to a range of programs. The Getting the Show Back on the Road program has seen over \$18 million provided under a risk-share program. There has been a very strong take-up of that. There has also been strong support for event providers. Recently, of course, we had the \$3 million event suppliers support program, which provided support of up to \$50 000 for eligible event suppliers. There was also the \$1.8 million nightclub assistance program for an area that was heavily impacted by COVID circumstances. The Premier announced the \$1.3 million performing arts, theatres and cinemas assistance program some weeks ago. All programs were targeted because we have consistently focused on ensuring that the interests and needs of the sector were and are considered very closely.

One thing that we are very pleased about is the trends we are now seeing in audiences returning to venues. Obviously, with arrangements for venues to be at 100 per cent capacity, we are seeing a very, very good take-up. Last week or the week before, along with the Minister for Tourism, we announced the English Premier League fixtures to be showcased in July. Already, general tickets for the Manchester United game have sold out, but there are still some tickets available for those seeking hospitality and travel packages. Of course, we have a range of other events booked in to Optus Stadium and other VenuesWest facilities. The audience trend is very, very strong and demonstrates that Western Australians appreciate that the circumstances they faced under COVID required them to take extra precautions, but, as we know, Western Australians love their sport, love their arts and they love their events, and they will come out in their tens of thousands to support them. That trend is increasing and I am pleased to say that a number of big acts are also booking for later this year and into 2023. That means, along with the efforts of the tourism minister and the McGowan government to continue to attract interstate and international visitation to the state, the effort is focused on ensuring that Western Australia is seen as the place people choose to visit, either for a sporting or a cultural event, or indeed to wander out yonder to experience the magnificent regions of Western Australia.

Things are looking good and demonstrate that the commitment by the McGowan government to respond to the need, to respond to the challenge and to provide support where it is required is now bearing good fruit. I look forward to more fruit being delivered as part of a lovely fruit salad of experiences in the future!

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Vasse with the last question.