

SCARBOROUGH BEACH, TOURIST PRECINCT

Grievance

MR QUIGLEY (Innaloo) [9.28 am]: I call upon the Government of Western Australia to recognise the Scarborough beach area as a tourist precinct. At the outset of my grievance I recognise the Government's policy of not extending trading hours beyond the current tourist precincts and the Western Australian Tourism Commission's focus on Fremantle and Northbridge as the primary tourist precincts, which is in accordance with the election policy of the Gallop Labor Government. However, not recognising Scarborough as a tourist precinct would be akin to Basil Fawlty standing on the corner of Scarborough Beach Road and West Coast Highway and saying that Scarborough is not a tourist area. It would be as ludicrous as that. Scarborough is already a well-recognised tourist precinct. It has got it all. It has entertainment in its hotels and bars. It has the Indi Bar and Bistro, which regularly hosts Australia's leading blues guitarist, Michael Videlli, and the White Sands Tavern, which is the young peoples' bar. There is the Stamford Arms which has a variety of over 50 beers and the sophisticated piano bar at the Rendezvous Observation City Hotel.

I must compliment the Rendezvous Observation City Hotel for its community spirit in providing six security guards in the car parks and adjacent areas during the entertainment hours. Although I am getting one of those pathetic hollow roasts from the member for Kalgoorlie, even the Liberal Party in Western Australia recognises Scarborough's many attractions because each year it goes there to hold its state conference. No doubt, many of the attractions that its members come there for include the fine dining in the area: Nick Fiore's restaurants, La Spiaggia and Cafe Del Pescatore; the best burger bar in Australia, Peters By the Sea, run by Yianni and Vassilis; and Neak Sin's Thai Palace. The accommodation at Scarborough ranges from the five-star accommodation of The Hotel Rendezvous, the four-star Sunmoon Resort, the serviced apartments of Observation Rise, Sandcastles Holiday Apartments and the Seashells Serviced Apartments. The area has all the attributes of a premium tourist precinct.

The added attractions beyond entertainment and eating are the sports facilities. Many of the tourists who come to Western Australia come to the Scarborough area because of the natural surf attractions between Scarborough and Trigg Beach. Many overseas and Asian tourists visit because it is the premium surf beach in Western Australia. Although the Scarborough and Trigg Surf Life Saving Clubs have only 750 and 850 members respectively, and are not as big as the North Cottesloe Surf Life Saving Club, which has 2 000 members, the state surf titles are hosted on the stretch of beach between Scarborough and Trigg every year because it is a real surf beach. Every year the club championship is shared between Trigg and Scarborough Surf Life Saving Clubs.

The Prime Minister and rock stars stay at Scarborough. It is an area of natural attraction. The area hosts national sporting events and last year held the national inflatable rescue boat championships during winter when there was heavy surf. Three weeks ago it also hosted the national titles for the surf boat rowers league. In two weeks the state surf championships will be hosted there again. The Scarboro Surf Life Saving Club is intent on building a water polo pool adjacent to the clubhouse and illuminated night volleyball courts so that the area can host two Olympic sports and a national competition.

Community groups are also promoting the Scarborough area, such as the Scarborough Beach Association, Scarborough Rotary, Scarborough Beach Rotary and the Scarborough and District Progress Association. The City of Stirling, the premium local government authority in Western Australia, led by the best mayor in Western Australia, Mr Tony Vallelonga, has embarked upon the Scarborough environs area strategy, or SEAS, to promote this area and its infrastructure to host tourism. That move has been greatly supported by local councillor Bill Stewart, and local businessmen including Mr Paul King, Mr Dave Lombardo and Mr Chas Paradis. Mr Ben Grummels has started a fantastic web site on "www.scarboro.info" that actively promotes the area, which I encourage all members to visit. We have the assets and the entertainment and we want the Government to recognise that this area is a premium tourist precinct in Western Australia and to focus its decisions on the delivery of services to Scarborough. When the Government decides on where to put underground power in the northern corridor, it should choose this precinct of Scarborough. Traffic lights need to be installed along the length of the West Coast Highway. The premium spots would be at Brighton and Scarborough Beach Roads, as this would facilitate the traffic flow around Scarborough and help the City of Stirling and Mayor Vallelonga to develop the Scarborough beachfront in an orderly fashion and control the traffic problem that we have there.

The Scarborough area should be declared a tourist precinct, but not for the purposes of extending the trading hours or getting the Western Australian Tourism Commission involved, because the businessmen I have mentioned and the community groups are capable of doing that, and the community spirit is there. We want recognition by the Government that this area is a premium tourist precinct, so that when decisions are being made, for example, by Transperth, about where to route the "900" series bus, it will put a couple of them between the Glendalough train station and the Scarborough beachfront to bring the tourists down there.

I raised the issue of renaming the Glendalough train station to the Scarborough Beach Road station with the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure late last year. Tourists leaving the city for this premium tourist destination need to have a readily identifiable train station as their step-off point into this area.

I call upon the Government to recognise this area as a tourist precinct.

MR BROWN (Bassendean - Minister for State Development) [9.36 am]: I am pleased to be able to receive this grievance today. It is important for the tourism industry in Western Australia to have a variety of attractions and locations that offer a variety of experiences for tourists in Western Australia. The first thing that strikes me whenever talking about tourism in Western Australia is how a tourist is defined. I talked to some senior people in the hospitality industry this week, one of whom operates in the Perth central business district. He described a tourist as anybody coming from outside the CBD. There are many ways to describe a tourist. However, what has been put today is that Scarborough needs to be recognised as an area that is attractive and one that is valuable for tourism. The term "tourism precinct" is commonly used to describe an area that has an eclectic mix of activities, experiences or themes clustered in a critical mass of attractions that is easily accessed by visitors in a defined area. The Western Australian Tourism Commission uses this description when it refers to areas such as Perth, Fremantle, the Hillarys Boat Harbour, Northbridge and Scarborough. The Western Australian Tourism Commission and, therefore, the Government, recognise that Scarborough is an important tourism precinct and an area in which every effort should be made to ensure that its attractiveness is enhanced. Like the member for Innaloo, I commend the City of Stirling for its efforts in this regard. A publication titled "Scarborough Environs Area Strategy (SEAS)" was issued by the City of Stirling on July 2001. This is an excellent and very detailed publication that sets out a variety of objectives that the city wishes to pursue. It is important to refer to the vision statement that is contained on the inside cover of that publication. It reads -

To enhance Scarborough's role as the heart of the Sunset Coast by fostering the area's tradition, its natural attractions and unique lifestyle, whilst welcoming everyone all year round

That is an excellent vision for the area. The strategy goes on to note -

The coastal area of the City of Stirling is one of the most attractive and heavily used sections of the Perth metropolitan coastline.

It continues -

Scarborough Beach has not reached its potential as an exciting recreational and community focus.

The strategy goes on about the types of changes that the City of Stirling would like to see occur at Scarborough. We all know that to have an attractive tourism destination requires a number of components, one of which is a natural advantage in the area. The natural advantage for Scarborough Beach is, of course, its fantastic beach.

Recently I spoke to an ambassador for a country that has a policy of encouraging 10 per cent of its university students to gain an education internationally; that is, not gain their university education in their country of origin. When we were talking about where those students went in Australia, the point was made that very few came to Western Australia and that most were attracted to certain other locations which had lots of sunshine and good beaches. I made the obvious point to the ambassador that one need not look much further than Western Australia; that in the metropolitan area Scarborough was an obvious location, and there were also a number of regional areas. He said that that was true and that he visited the area, but he pointed out that many of his countrymen, and particularly young people who were making decisions about where to go, did not have that information. That indicated to us that we must do more to ensure that the attractiveness of Western Australia and its great places - Scarborough Beach is one of those - are promoted more vigorously when we have our international promotions.

The strategy document goes on to deal with the Scarborough Beach precinct. The strategy recognises the overall importance of developing a precinct that is attractive to tourists and tourism. I would be very pleased to work with other ministers who have responsibilities in areas of transport, planning and local government to try to ensure that we do everything possible, within the financial constraints of government, to ensure that Scarborough is developed as a tourism precinct, because it is a significant area that we want to be developed.

Equally, it is important for Western Australia to have locations that are attractive to people of all ages. Scarborough is certainly attractive to young people, as well as people of all other ages. It is also attractive to those who love going to a good beach and who enjoy fine wine and food. As the member for Innaloo said, there is an opportunity for that to be built on. For the area to be attractive overall, investment by the private sector is needed to ensure that there is a variety of attractions in the one location that will act as a magnet for attracting tourists, from wherever they may come, to Scarborough Beach. I am happy to work with the member for Innaloo to ensure that occurs.