

TOURISM INDUSTRY — GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

**6. Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE to the Premier:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to creating local jobs and supporting local businesses through its unprecedented investment in tourism. Can the Premier update the house on what the government is doing to protect jobs and support our tourism industry in dealing with the challenges of the coronavirus and the east coast bushfires; and, in particular, how will the government be supporting businesses and tourism operators in regional Western Australia?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

I thank the member for Murray–Wellington for the question. We have delivered unprecedented investment in tourism, with record amounts of international marketing and events funding, and certainty in international marketing and events. We worked tirelessly to attract direct flights from foreign capitals into Western Australia and on the expansion of existing services. The other day, the Minister for Tourism announced the expansion of the Singapore Airlines service. This has achieved record numbers of visitors to Western Australia spending record amounts. This has delivered the strongest growth in tourism of any state in Australia. That is what this minister and this government have delivered.

It is true that we are facing national and global challenges. The bushfires over east were interpreted by many people internationally as though the whole country was suffering from a severe bushfire outbreak, and it has affected tourism across the country. The coronavirus has clearly impacted tourism both here and interstate, and, obviously, Chinese tourists have been an important part of our travel market. That is why, within a week, we have acted to support our tourism businesses and operators across Western Australia. We have acted faster than any other state or territory. The \$12.85 million tourism package that we announced yesterday will promote Western Australia's tourism industry interstate and overseas and start the process of delivering even more cheaper regional airfares. Five million dollars will be spent immediately to market and support initiatives to bring holiday-makers to Western Australia—that is \$5 million being spent as soon as possible to promote our state. The \$8 million affordable airfare fund will ensure that our regional communities continue to enjoy cheaper flights on key routes. We will talk with the airlines immediately with the aim of rolling out the program even further. That will be subject to negotiation, but the \$8 million is there. This government has already demonstrated cheaper airfares to Broome, Exmouth, Monkey Mia, Carnarvon, Esperance and Albany.

The tourism package was received well by industry. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia's Chris Rodwell said —

It is a positive step, demonstrating that the government understands the impact of coronavirus on WA business.

Evan Hall from the Tourism Council Western Australia said —

Western Australia has moved quicker than other States to respond to the coronavirus travel ban and secure new marketing deals to support the industry.

We are aware that many people in small and medium-sized enterprises are suffering because of what is going on now. That is why we are doing everything we can to support them, and this package is further evidence of that.