

TOURISM, INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL DOWNTURN

1482. Mrs C.L. Edwardes to the Premier

I refer the Premier to the continuing worldwide concern over the SARS virus and the resulting downturn with the tourist industry and ask –

- (a) what assistance has the State Labor Government put in place to assist Western Australian tourist operators who are experiencing financial difficulty as a result of the international travel downturn;
- (b) has the State Labor Government considered granting a moratorium on State Government fees and charges to affected tourism and related businesses, especially payroll tax; and
- (c) what support will the State Labor Government give to employees, especially casual employees, who are unable to work due to this down turn?

Dr G.I. GALLOP replied:

I am advised that:

- (a) The war in Iraq and the SARS virus has had an impact on the tourism market, particularly in the number of international visitors to the State.

To address this downturn the Government has redirected funds from campaigns planned for the international market – specifically UK, Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong – into markets that are still delivering a return. These markets are intrastate, interstate and New Zealand.

In relation to the intrastate market, the Hon. Member for Kingsley may have seen a copy of the Western Australian Tourism Commission's Winterbreaks Catalogue which was included in the West Australian newspaper on Saturday 3 May 2003. This campaign has leveraged additional funding from the Federal Government's \$2m budget for the 'See Australia' campaign.

It is also worth noting that a number of the South East Asian markets are reporting that consumer confidence is returning and they are travelling again. As a result, the Western Australian Tourism Commission will be back in the market with advertising campaigns in Singapore and Malaysia.

- (b) Not at this time.
- (c) The normal range of unemployment and associated benefits will be available to workers should the situation arise.