

HIGHWAY TO HELL — PERTH FESTIVAL 2020

132. Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY to the Minister for Culture and the Arts:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's success in securing world-class events for WA that bring more visitors to the state and support the local economy. Can the minister outline to the house how the overwhelmingly successful *Highway to Hell* event provided not only a once-in-a-generation event for Western Australians, but also a boost for businesses in my electorate?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

I am very pleased to respond to the member for Bicton's question. Every now and then in cultural history there is an event that captures the imagination of the population, and there is no doubt that the *Highway to Hell* event captured the imagination of Western Australians; there is no doubt about that. I think it demonstrates how we, as Western Australians, should never be hesitant or reluctant to celebrate our Western Australian stories. The Bon Scott and AC/DC story that was encapsulated by the *Highway to Hell* event is a great demonstration of the way in which a unique Western Australian cultural story can attract people of all backgrounds, tastes and experiences, from all parts of Australia and Western Australia, and some international visitors, and we should be very proud of that. There is no doubt that it exceeded expectations. For those of us who were there, I was at the Canning Bridge quarter watching the streaming numbers of people, of all ages, coming across Canning Bridge. There were people at Tompkins Park who gathered for the world record attempt. We now, thankfully and happily, are the world record holders here in Perth for the —

The SPEAKER: May I interject? The member for Murray–Wellington and I are world record holders, so I just thought I would let the member know.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: There you are, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker is part of the biggest air guitar ensemble in which over 3 500 people put us into the *Guinness World Records* under the tuition of the “ginger assassin”, who is a teacher from the member for Swan Hills' electorate up in Ellenbrook. The benefits to the Western Australian community and the businesses along the *Highway to Hell*—the stretch of Canning Highway—was immeasurable. There was a huge response from the local businesses along there and massive responses from people, posting their interpretation of their experiences. A big shout out to those at the Perth Festival. This was a Perth Festival event, supported very strongly by the Western Australian Tourism Commission. The Minister for Tourism has now signed an agreement with the Perth Festival so that there will be a signature event. We want to congratulate and acknowledge all the emergency services personnel and the police who were part of it. Main Roads and the Public Transport Authority did a tremendous job. Quite frankly, I think David Hines said it a few days before that they were wondering what exactly was going to happen, because this event has not happened on this scale or at this level of uniqueness before.

Again, people responded brilliantly. In these testing and challenging times it really is important to reflect on what can be achieved when we all come together and when we share a unique story that is our Western Australian story and that we acknowledge the tremendous contribution that culture and art activities can and do play in the economy of Western Australia. We also acknowledge that we should never be ashamed of telling the world our Western Australian stories.

I have to tell members that on *The Project* on Channel 10 a few days before there was a bit of ridicule about this event. I tell members that we proved them wrong. We are proud of Western Australia. We are proud of our creative artists. There were over 1 000 artists included in the event, including a massive sausage roll! All those things demonstrated that we should be very proud that we can peak during these events and that they will attract lots and lots of people. They will be great for business, and they will demonstrate an ongoing pride in what we can produce in Western Australia, going forward, in the creative industries.