

CHINA, BENEFIT TO STATE OF ECONOMIC TIES

1239. Mr J.R. QUIGLEY to the Minister for Tourism:

We are all aware of the importance of Western Australia's economic ties with China, particularly to the State's resource sector. Will the minister outline what benefits this relationship can bring to other sectors of the economy?

Mr R.C. KUCERA replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question and his interest in tourism issues, particularly the Scarborough foreshore in his electorate.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr R.C. KUCERA: There is no doubt that the Gorgon project and the North West Shelf gas deals will have enormous economic spin-offs for the State. On the weekend I was pleased to represent the Premier in the north of the State with people interested in investing in tourism projects. Last week I released the latest results of tourism registers in the State, representing \$1.2 billion in proposed tourism projects. In fact, \$556 million worth of projects are capitalised and under way. Enormous confidence is shown in the State.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Warren-Blackwood to order for the first time.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: I note the new research by the Australian Tourist Commission, which was highlighted in an article in today's *The West Australian* by Andrew Gregory. I am happy to table the article.

[See paper No 1661.]

Mr R.C. KUCERA: The Western Australian Tourism Commission has identified China as a core market for Western Australia; indeed, the whole of Australia. Tourism research figures show that almost 5 000 Chinese tourists visited Western Australia during 1999-2000 and spent \$9 million. That was in spite of the difficulties experienced because of severe acute respiratory syndrome. The Chinese now place Australia at the top of their holiday list. The State Government and the Tourism Commission seek to substantially increase Chinese tourism.

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: I note that despite the great efforts of people like Manny Papadoulis and others in the Tourism Commission, yet again we see the Leader of the Opposition talk down our great city and the tourism industry.

The Tourism Commission is investigating the possibility of opening a tourism office in Shanghai in the new year. The commission will participate in the seventh Australian travel mission to China. The State is increasingly well placed to reap benefits from investment in the State by China as well as from the many millions of Chinese who see Australia as a preferred tourism destination.

I am pleased to present those figures and advise that we are working together. The article in *The West Australian* states that the federal tourism minister is in China supporting the confidence that we also support in China. I compliment the Western Australian Tourism Commission and Tourism Council Western Australia on their efforts to make sure that people realise that Western Australia is not just a better place in which to live, but also an even better place to visit.