

TOURISM — RED TAPE REDUCTION

657. MR N.W. MORTON to the Minister for Tourism:

Mr Speaker, before I ask my question, with your indulgence can I just acknowledge young Bryzlyn Sin and her family who are in your gallery here this afternoon. Young Bryzlyn has recently returned, at the tender age of 10 years old, from playing piano at Carnegie Hall, and also at Sing50, which celebrated 50 years of Singaporean music. Congratulations to Bryzlyn!

[Applause.]

Mr N.W. MORTON: My question is to the Minister for Tourism. I understand the process to establish a new tourism product in Western Australia can be both time-consuming and challenging, often requiring the approval of several government agencies and compliance with a range of requirements. Can the minister please advise the house of what the Liberal-National government is doing to help streamline the approvals process and reduce red tape?

Dr K.D. HAMES replied:

This is an issue that both I and the former shadow Minister for Tourism Hon Michelle Roberts were involved in discussions on in the lead-up to the last election. It was clear, in the presentations made to both of us, that there was, at times, an issue in getting tourism approvals through the process. Often, numerous agencies were involved in trying to get approval. It was very time-consuming and very difficult to have to go from one agency to get approval through that to another and then to another. Often those agencies were not working together, and often the whole process was not coordinated. We have now created a group of people delegated by each of those agencies. I recently wrote to the Ministers for Transport; Planning; Environment; Lands; and Racing and Gaming seeking support for such a committee when required. It will be on an ad hoc basis when issues come forward that either seem to be very good ideas that need a coordinated approach to get them started, or when a tourist agency has been stuck with a particular agency or stuck with a series of agencies, to try to pull those together. This group will come together whenever that is the case, to try to move forward. I have spoken to each of those ministers, and when required I will get those ministers together to discuss issues if there are roadblocks created by any of those agencies that are seen to be appropriate.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warnbro!

Dr K.D. HAMES: That commitment was made by the former shadow minister, and I think it is a very good idea. There have not been a lot of issues for us to need to start this sooner; there have not been a lot of specific things that have come forward, but there are some in the wings, and we will get on and make sure that they are sorted.

Tourism is critical for this state as we move ahead. As we see the good times ease in the mining industry, it is absolutely critical for this state to look at alternative sources of income and employment. We see tourism and agriculture as the two key areas in which this government needs to move forward and create opportunities, and this is one of the ways we will do that.