

BETTER BUSINESS BLITZ, EXMOUTH

193. Mrs C.A. MARTIN to the Minister for Tourism:

I understand that the minister recently attended a very successful tourism forum in Exmouth called the Better Business Blitz. Will the minister inform the House whether any other regional business communities in Western Australia, and more particularly any small businesses in the Kimberley, will benefit from this new service?

Mr R.C. KUCERA replied:

I thank the member for Kimberley for the question. Before I answer that question, I will comment on the issue of state-federal cooperation. Yesterday the federal Minister for Small Business and Tourism and I announced the biggest coup that Western Australia has ever had in the tourism industry. Next year the Australian Tourism Exchange, which is the third biggest tourism exchange in the world, will be held in Western Australia. That will bring some 2 500 national and international tourism operators to this State. The event will be worth about \$10 million in direct spending to this State. In addition, it will showcase Western Australia to the rest of the world. I thank the Premier for his support of and involvement in that. It will be a significant event.

Dr G.I. Gallop: It is interesting that at the tourism awards this year the federal minister, Mr Hockey, spoke very highly of our Government's performance.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: Indeed he did.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr R.C. KUCERA: It is better to work cooperatively. I will come back to the Better Business Blitz to which the member for Kimberley referred. The program has been designed to help our regional tourism operators. A team of people survey particular areas in the State, including the State's tourism zones, to establish the needs of small business people in those areas and how their businesses can be developed. A series of workshops and seminars are then developed, which include speakers, and taken to those areas. This program worked very well in Exmouth recently. I was pleased to close the program. It was tremendous.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr R.C. KUCERA: I hope that the businesspeople in Exmouth note the mirth of members opposite, and in particular the Leader of the Opposition. This concept is positive. The program surveys what small business people need and then the Government provides those services and seminars for them. Importantly, after the seminar, the tourism and business development staff work with the businesses to make sure the programs are followed through, and that the product can be developed in the area. The early indications are that the new model is assisting tourism and businesses in the regions. The Government received very positive feedback from Exmouth. As a result, more visits have been scheduled for the rest of the year. The program will be held in Kununurra in May, in the Swan Valley during July, and in Esperance and Kalgoorlie in September, and a further seminar has been scheduled for Pemberton in November.

I thank the member for Geraldton for his assistance in running a similar program for retailers, which was called Supa Shop and was recently successfully run in Geraldton. In conjunction with the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, the other day we announced a partners in business program that will be aimed at assisting small subcontractors in the building industry, and subcontractors generally throughout the State, to make sure that they get support from the Government.