

STATE TOURISM STRATEGY

906. Mrs D.J. GUISE to the Minister for Tourism:

Will the minister outline the benefits to industry and the broader Western Australian community of the new concept for state tourism strategy announced earlier this month?

Mr R.C. KUCERA replied:

I thank the member for her question. The new concept for state tourism is designed to put Western Australia on the map and enable it to market overseas some of the greatest tourist attractions in this country. For the first time it brings a big picture perspective to tourism in this State. In meetings last week with my state counterparts and the federal minister, the federal minister was quite complimentary in his praise of what WA is now doing. First, the tourism zones have been reduced from 10 to five. However, there are still some teething issues that must be dealt with. I thank the member for Kimberley for her assistance in dealing with matters in that area. We must still work through some issues in the Pilbara and the Kimberley. I met with the Pilbara people yesterday. The bottom line is that we will be able to put Western Australia on the map as an icon for this country in terms of some of the magnificent things that this State has to show to people. The Tourism Council Western Australia stated in a media release on 1 August that it will maximise resources and minimise duplication, and it will make the State easier to market overseas.

Another basic and practical matter is that through the new concept strategy, regional tourism organisations will now have access to 50 per cent more funding than was available under the previous Government. The commonwealth Minister for Small Business and Tourism, Joe Hockey, said last week that he felt WA had done a great job in reducing the number of zones. The Government is looking forward to working with the tourism industry to ensure the strategy delivers benefits, including jobs, which is the most important thing. Approximately 80 000 people are employed in the tourism industry in this State. We must ensure that those jobs are retained so that the future of our young people is assured. We want to make sure that this State is not only a better place to live but also the natural choice for a holiday.