

NATIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE NINES TOURNAMENT

**950. Mr S.J. PRICE to the Minister for Tourism:**

Before I ask my question, on behalf of the member for Kalamunda, I welcome the representatives from Wheels in the gallery this afternoon.

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's significant investment in events that drive economic growth across WA's tourism and hospitality sectors and helps to create more local jobs. Can the minister update the house on what the National Rugby League Nines tournament will mean for the state's tourism industry?

**Mr P. PAPALIA replied:**

I thank the member for his interest in tourism and, I assume, rugby league. I do not know whether he is a rugby league fan. However, there are plenty of them in the house. The Deputy Premier is one of the biggest fans in Western Australia. It was great when a couple of days ago we began three days of announcements in my portfolios and an announcement about the NRL Nines coming to Western Australia next year on 14 and 15 February for an extravaganza of Rugby League's preseason. This is its preseason event. I would speculate that it will be much more successful and interesting than the AFLX. This will be a really interesting, good event. In the NRL Nines, all 16 men's teams will be represented. Most of the top-end players will be competing and there will be four NRLW teams, including the Broncos, the current champions. We can see them at HBF Park, up close and personal, when our favourite players will be running around in a really exciting fast-paced novel game. It will be the first time it has ever happened in Australia. In the past, the NRL Nines event has happened only in New Zealand. It will be the first time it has come to Western Australia. On their own, the players will be making a contribution to tourism. They will bring 300 NRL players across for this event. It is a significant event that will make a valuable contribution. It will continue to engage with those NRL fans on the eastern seaboard, who watched an opening round doubleheader last year at the stadium for which 3 000 visitors came across. Of course, the State of Origin was held this year, which gave a spectacular return. I reckon about a quarter of the numbers in the stadium would have been from outside Western Australia. They are engaged with Western Australia and they know it is a great place to visit and watch their favourite game. Now we can entice them over at an attractive time of the year to watch the preseason event—the NRL Nines. It is another great announcement by the McGowan government that will boost tourism and fill our hotels, bars, restaurants and cafes. They will get out to the regions and create jobs right across the state.