

MAJOR EVENTS BILL 2023

Second Reading

Resumed from 22 February.

MS M.J. HAMMAT (Mirrabooka — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.15 pm]: I am delighted to have the opportunity to rise today to talk on this important bill, the Major Events Bill 2023, as part of the second reading debate. It is a terrific opportunity to reflect on the good work that this government is doing in the tourism space, and also to reflect on how important a vibrant and successful tourism industry is for not only our economy but also our society. Some great social benefits arise from tourism as well.

By way of starting, I want to talk a little about this bill and its purpose. I think the purpose is very clear and straightforward. It is clearly designed to facilitate Western Australia being competitive in attracting major events to be held here. The relevant minister has talked a number of times about the great success that came from the Ultimate Fighting Championship being held in Perth last month. I am not a fan of UFC, I have to say, so for me it was not a big deal, but clearly there are enormous fan bases not only in Western Australia and Australia but also right around the world. That event brought to Western Australia a significant number of interstate and international tourists. Importantly, flow-on benefits came from the broadcast of such an event and people saw exactly the wonderful tourism offerings that we have in Western Australia. I think that is a really good example of how important major events are to ensuring that we have a vibrant and successful tourism and events industry.

Major events are not the only plank, but they are such an important part of it, so having legislation that facilitates attracting those events to Western Australia is really a critical piece of the overall tourism puzzle. It is increasingly expected and increasingly common that international acts and bodies are looking for governments that have this kind of legislation to provide certainty for them to bring their events here. I note from the minister's second reading speech that most other jurisdictions in Australia already have major events legislation in place, which I think really underlines how important it is that we have similar legislation if we are to be competitive in this space.

The bill sets out some preconditions for having an event declared a major event, so it requires consideration of a number of factors before a major event is declared. It will also put in place some limits on that power, requiring that the minister consults a variety of people and that it is permitted only if it is in the public's interest. Other parts of the bill go through facilitations to allow events to take place smoothly and seamlessly wherever they are held. That includes construction of temporary works if they are required, so grandstands are a good example. It will also provide for the management of roads, traffic and other things that are often key to holding successful major events. It also sets out safety management provisions, which are again key considerations in holding events. There is also a part dealing with the commercial interests of event organisers, which we know is an increasingly important part of the overall event, and they often have significant funds that are tied up in the marketing of events as well. This bill clearly tries to put in place a simplified arrangement that will allow major events to be attracted to Western Australia and for those events to be managed in a way that international companies and organisations now expect. It is a key piece of facilitating the strengthening of our tourism industry.

What I want to talk about today is tourism in Western Australia more broadly and how important it is, as I said at the outset, not just economically, but also socially. It is kind of tempting just to reflect on all the wonderful events that we have had, so in preparing my comments today, I was reflecting on some of the incredible events that have been held in Western Australia. As I said, the Ultimate Fighting Championship is not my cup of tea, but it was certainly a very successful event in terms of the economic activity that it brought to Western Australia. I refer to great events like *Sculpture by the Sea*, which is currently on at Cottesloe Beach. I went to that over the long weekend and I have to say that the place was heaving with people; it was absolutely packed. Although we often think about tourism in terms of people who might come from interstate or overseas, clearly that kind of very local tourism has very positive the impacts on the local economy as well. I am sure that any cafe within a significant radius of Cottesloe Beach on a public holiday Monday will attest that it was, no doubt, heaving with people. That is a really great event that is currently on and I encourage people to go and see it. There is a whole suite of fantastic events that are, again, important in attracting people to be tourists in our own state. I know that the Minister for Tourism has talked in this place about the wonderful Busselton Jetty Swim. Busselton was just heaving with so many people. Many of us travelled from Perth to be part of that event. While we were there, we went to restaurants and cafes, stayed at accommodation and spent money in the local economy.

Mr R.H. Cook: I believe in your case you set a new record as well!

Ms M.J. HAMMAT: Sadly, I did not set a new record. Certainly not for my swimming, but maybe for my consumption at cafes and restaurants!

I think it is important to recognise that tourism is not just people who come here from interstate or overseas but in fact is also about having events in Western Australia that stimulate people to become tourists in their own state

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 15 March 2023]

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and to travel. Whether it is a couple of hours away or just within the metropolitan area, people spend money that they would not otherwise spend and they contribute to the local economy and ensure that people remain employed. Clearly, it has lots of fantastic economic benefits, but it also makes our society richer and better. The appreciation of arts like *Sculpture by the Sea*, a free event, is a great way that tourism products allow people to have a richer appreciation of our social settings as well. For those reasons, tourism is important. I think it is really important to think about not just in terms of the economic benefits, which are significant, but also the social benefits and the richness that it brings to people's lives.

I want to spend a bit of time talking about the economic impacts of tourism. Of course, one of the things that we have seen right around the world is that tourism was impacted by the pandemic. Tourism obviously suffered. The impact here has been a well-documented story. But what is really important is how well the tourism industry is actually recovering since we have opened the border in Western Australia. Expenditure for domestic travel in WA peaked at \$12.6 billion in the 2015–16 financial year. Although domestic tourism expenditure has been down, it is not down as much as the other states. In 2021–22, the figures I have in front of me show that domestic tourism expenditure for Western Australia was down 13.7 per cent compared with 2018–19, so the immediate period before the pandemic, but that in the other states the decline was much greater. The decline was 46.8 per cent for Victoria, 21.3 per cent for New South Wales and 21.9 per cent for Queensland when compared with the same period. That shows that a great rebound is occurring in Western Australia. I think that is a testament to the work of this government and this minister in ensuring that we have not just great events, but a whole range of strategies that are designed to ensure that tourism is returning to Western Australia. Again, I want to reflect on another statistic, which shows the same story comparing June 2022 with the 2018–19 levels. Domestic overnight visitors to Western Australia are down 7.6 per cent. That is a significant recovery. We are down just a very small amount compared with the pre-pandemic level. Again, when we look at the other states, we see that New South Wales and Victoria are 33 per cent below where they were pre-pandemic, South Australia is down 19 per cent and Queensland is down 14 per cent. We are doing an incredible job of recovering the tourism industry after the pandemic. I want to congratulate the minister for all the work he has done—a very proactive strategy that is about ensuring our tourism industry recovers. There is a number of levers that we need to pull. I think we understand that it is a complex industry and that there is a number of things we need to do if we are serious about making sure we have a pipeline of visitors coming to Western Australia to enjoy the really fantastic things we have to see and do here.

The other really important economic impact that I want to talk about is employment, because I think that is the other significant part of the story. Tourism is obviously something that is important in economic terms, but it employs a significant number of people. It is a labour-intensive industry. In WA, there were 56 310 people employed in tourism industries for the 2020–21 financial year. Again, it is down in some areas compared with the pre-pandemic era, but it is really important to note that some regions have seen an increase in employment. The south west area and the coral coast have both recorded increases in the number of people employed in tourism compared with the pre-pandemic era—the 2020–21 period. Again, I think that is a really interesting story. So, the recovery is there. There are clearly people in the industry and we can see that it is a significant employer in Western Australia. But, in a regional sense there are more people working those industries than before. We know that regional employment is something that is very important for regional areas to prosper and succeed, so, again, I think we need to see not just the broader economic impact of tourism in Western Australia, but also understand that it has a significant positive impact in regional areas. That is very important for making sure that we have a diversified economy that is delivering for all people regardless of where they live.

In my contribution today, I want to talk a little bit about a piece of work that has recently been released by the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre. It was launched on 3 February. My good colleague the member for Swan Hills was there and was one of the presenters. Its report is titled *Go your own WA*, so it is a very sophisticated pun! That really was an opportunity to get a bit of a snapshot of the tourism industry and reflect on some of the policy settings that would help ensure that the tourism industry remains a significant part of the Western Australian economy for some time. Before I go on and talk about that report, I want to say that I find its work across a wide range of policy areas to be quite a valuable contribution to the public debate in Western Australia. It is one of the few organisations that is doing research that considers both social and economic impacts in the Western Australian context. I think it is important to reflect that often WA is a bit different from some of the other states and that having an organisation like the BCEC that does that kind of inquiry into not just economic outcomes, but also social outcomes, is incredibly valuable. I want to use this opportunity to give a shout-out to Alan Duncan, who runs the BCEC, for its ongoing contribution to Western Australia and public debate about a whole range of important issues. This report looks at tourism, considering how tourism was impacted by the pandemic and how it is recovering. Interestingly, it also looks at people's perception of tourism—how do people feel about tourism in both their local area and more broadly? I will come to those reflections in a little moment. I think it is a very good report and there was a very good panel discussion on the day. It illustrated a great deal of interest in and passion for the tourism industry in Western Australia.

As I said, one of the report's findings is that our recovery in Western Australia is going very well—better than other states. Because of our geography and the nature of Western Australia, we have some significant differences from how other states experience tourism. Unsurprisingly, a high proportion of people coming to Western Australia travel by air; 89 per cent of domestic interstate visitors fly here. I do not know why they would not drive across the Nullarbor! I have done that. It is a fantastic trip and I would recommend it. It is a great way to see the country. It is a long trip so, unsurprisingly, the majority of people fly here. We can compare the 89 per cent of domestic travellers who come here by air with about 64 per cent of travellers who fly to New South Wales from interstate. Perhaps that is unsurprising but it demonstrates the importance of airports and the importance of flights to ensure we have a good tourism product here in Western Australia and people can access it. Roads are important for a whole range of other economic activities but, for tourism, the majority of people clearly fly. Also unsurprisingly, when people come, they tend to stay for longer here than they do in other states. The average length of stay here in 2021–22 was 4.6 nights, whereas nationally it was slightly lower at 3.8 nights within the same period. Again, that is unsurprising given the distance that people are required to travel to come here. It is not the sort of place they would come for a shorter stay. People also tend to travel to regional areas and one of the challenges is that travelling to regional areas involves significant time. I am sure we have all had visitors stay with us who come from the east coast or perhaps overseas and they say they want to travel over the whole state and they are here for three days. People do not understand the vast distances that exist in Western Australia. We sometimes think that regional travel can be challenging but visitors actually spend more nights in regional WA than in Perth.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms M.J. HAMMAT: These things show us quite a picture. Again, it is unsurprising for people who live here, but the regional areas did incredibly well through the pandemic. Obviously many of us had the experience of holidaying in our own state. We often discovered new joys. The regional tourism offering was quite resilient through that period. That is important.

One of the other important findings in this report is that there is a concentrated holiday season during which a lot of travel occurs—what we know as the typical holiday season. That underlines the importance of this legislation. The main purpose of this bill is to attract major events to Western Australia. That will allow for events to stimulate travel to Western Australia from both interstate and overseas outside the traditional holiday period. That is a key part of making sure people travel here not just in peak periods when they find that the joint is heaving for a few weeks at a time, but also during the long periods when there is less activity. Having events to fill in the calendar, for want of a better of a description, is a key part of making sure we have a regular stream of tourists travelling here and really spreading out the times during which people travel. I reiterate that this bill will fill a really important strategic role in making sure we have the levers to be able to stimulate tourism products that are going to lead to travel at the times it is needed.

We also understand that international students are a key part of stimulating travel. We have had an incredible focus on ensuring that international students travel back to Western Australia. We know that it is not only the students who come to study. Their families often also come as visitors to the state. That is a really important strategy of this government, underlined by the fact we have appointed a Minister for International Education. That really underlines that it is a key part of ensuring we are doing everything we can to have a really vibrant tourism industry in this state.

I want to talk briefly about a couple of other findings in the report. One is the result of work looking at the importance of Google searches to deliver tourists. When I reflect on my own holiday booking habits, it comes as no surprise that the first thing people do is google a place they might have heard about to see whether they would like to come and, if they do, what it will cost and what they will be able to see. Stimulating Google searches is an important strategy. This report finds that, on average, a 50 per cent increase in worldwide internet search intensity about travelling to Western Australia would lead to an increase of about 130 000 visitors in the year following the change in that search intensity. If we increase Google searches, more people will travel, which is perhaps not such a shocking finding when we think about it, but I had not previously appreciated how important it is to the equation. Again, major events are an important part of that because one of the ways that people think about where they would like to go in the world is if a friend or family member has travelled somewhere. They might have spoken to them about it or seen posts on their Instagram page or on other social media. That stimulates interests. Part of it is having events so that people come or they may see where an event is being held because they have an interest in the event, which can lead to a bit of activity. It is about using search optimisations to ensure there is a front-of-mind product. The Minister for Tourism has been doing some remarkable work in this space. Members might have seen the billboards; I think one is in Times Square and one is in London with a fantastic whale shark coming out in 3D. It is a really compelling way to get images about our unique fauna in the front of people's minds to stimulate interest and activity. The other thing is that no trip to Western Australia is complete without a quokka selfie. We have seen a remarkable number of very high profile people with significant social media followings post all sorts of fabulous posts with quokkas. Who could not like and enjoy them? These are all part of an overall strategy. It is about ensuring

that Western Australia is front of mind when people think about tourism. It is really important to understand that it is backed up by research. It is backed up by figures that say these are not just fun activities, although that is how we might see them, because we would all love to get a quokka selfie as well. It is about having an overall strategy that contributes to people on the other side of the world searching for Western Australia and then being able to land on a webpage that will stimulate their interest and make it easy for them to follow through and book a holiday here. That points to this government's very sophisticated strategy, which sits behind some of the activities we have seen and is how this bill fits into those strategies as well.

The final thing in the report I want to talk about, which I thought was interesting, is that it conducted a survey asking people to convey their positive reflections of tourism as well as some of their more negative concerns. It explores how people, not just in Perth, feel about tourism. Unsurprisingly perhaps, people in the metropolitan area were very positive about tourism; 74 per cent of people in Perth believe that tourism creates more jobs; 83 per cent of people feel it makes an economic contribution; and 70 per cent of residents believe that tourism attracts investment into the area. In Perth there were overwhelmingly positive responses. It was a bit more nuanced in some of the regional areas including the south west and the coral coast. Perhaps that is not surprising, given that these are smaller towns and communities and that both experience significant peak seasons. There is a lot of tourism in the south west. Again, anyone who has ever been in Busselton during the period between Christmas and new year will understand that a significant number of people come into that town, and that creates some challenges.

People's reflections on these factors in those regional areas were influenced by when they were asked the question—the presence of these issues at the front of their mind was affected by how recently they had experienced that peak season—but there were a couple of things that came through. Overwhelmingly, people recognise the importance of tourism in their regional areas and towns, and they support it. People are particularly interested in tourism that is also delivering a benefit for the local community—tourism that is developing services, tours and activities in a way that local residents can also enjoy those tours and activities benefits the local community, as well. That is very important to building support for tourism in those communities. People also recognise the economic impacts very favourably and clearly see that tourism has a very positive impact on their local economy. But there are concerns about managing the numbers of people. Things like increased costs for groceries were on people's minds, and also the potential flow-on to issues such as housing. Unsurprisingly, that issue was more likely to be perceived as problematic by low income earners in those areas. People who earn less than \$41 000 were more likely to identify those issues. I think that really underlines that people very much understand the benefits that tourism brings to not just the state as a whole, but also their local communities, but it is important that we go about that in a way that engages and works with those local communities.

I will finish with a few reflections on our unique cultural heritage. Of course, we have a lot of wonderful things in Western Australia that I think are incredibly beautiful. It is an incredibly amazing place to live, and why would people not want to come here and enjoy it? We have a wonderful natural environment and fantastic weather, and our proximity to the growing middle classes in Asia makes Western Australia well placed for their tourism, but we also have a unique cultural heritage. For more than 60 000 years, traditional owners and First Nations people have cared for this land. Things like the Aboriginal cultural centre—again, spearheaded by this government—that will be built on the banks of the Derbarl Yerrigan are a really important part of making sure that our tourism offering includes that culture and recognises that it is a unique, beautiful, profound part of the Western Australian experience.

I think that there are opportunities—I know that these are being explored—to ensure that we do more. In the same way that we can work with local communities and develop in a way that is sensitive to their needs, we can develop cultural tourism experiences working with our First Nations people and do that in a way that is sensitive to their needs. The cultural centre that we are building is a great example of that, but I think there are other things we can do to ensure that we have a range of different offerings in not only Perth, but also our regional areas. I think it is key that we integrate our First Nations people into those tourism opportunities and ensure that those communities benefit from the tourism that occurs so that we are not only growing a vibrant and successful tourism industry for people overseas, but also delivering the benefits of economic growth to the communities that will set them up for the future.

I am out of time. I feel there is a lot more I could say. I want to close by congratulating the minister for not just bringing in this bill, which I think is an important piece of the puzzle, but also all the excellent work that is happening to ensure that our tourism industry recovers quickly from the impacts of the pandemic. It is about not only recovering, but also growing the industry for the future. This government is really committed to diversifying the economy because of the economic benefits that flow from that. It means jobs for people, and jobs mean a whole range of social benefits arising for those individuals and their families. The work that is happening will ensure that we are not just trying to bounce back from the pandemic, but also investing in an industry that is going to be a key part of the Western Australian economy for the future, and will ensure that we properly celebrate and enjoy the wonderful

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and unique things about being in Western Australia. With that, I am out of time. I commend the minister for his work. Thank you.

MS J.J. SHAW (Swan Hills — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.44 pm]: It is my pleasure this afternoon to speak about the Major Events Bill 2023. This is actually my second iteration as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Tourism. It has been a great pleasure to support firstly the Leader of the House, Minister Templeman, in the tourism portfolio, and now the Deputy Premier. It is an absolutely fantastic portfolio to be working in. The people in the tourism industry are wonderful. In fact, in the first iteration of my job, Minister Templeman and I carried out a statewide consultation across every regional tourism destination.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Ms J.J. SHAW: It was great. It was a bit “what goes on tour, stays on tour”, though! Over 700 tourism businesses were engaged as part of that exercise. Genuinely, the small and large business operators were all wonderful to deal with. It is certainly a very passionate industry. It was observed to me a couple of times, sometimes somewhat ironically, that no-one is in tourism for the money. It is a genuinely passionate sector, with people who are really committed to making sure that everybody that they serve enjoys themselves and has a good time. They are deeply committed to improving their local communities and showcasing what a wonderful place Western Australia is.

It is genuinely a pleasure to be working in the tourism portfolio again, but it is ultimately an economic portfolio, and it has massive opportunities for the state. It is a key pillar of this state government’s Diversify WA strategy, and significant investments are being made more generally as part of our overall strategic vision for the tourism portfolio and as part of our COVID recovery initiatives. COVID was very tough for our tourism sector. There was a very complex set of challenges and really famine or feast-type circumstances. We had record intrastate tourism as Western Australians wandered out yonder and explored our own backyard, but at the very same time, the labour that those tourism operators rely upon for support was not coming in. We did not have the seasonal backpackers and workers, so many tourism operators were absolutely pushed to their limit to service the record intrastate demand we had. Simultaneously, particularly in the Perth metropolitan area, a lot of operators were really struggling, because they are very exposed to the interstate and international markets, and, obviously, their customers were not able to enter the state. I want to put on the record my deep admiration for the resilience demonstrated in the tourism sector. I am so pleased to see the sector rebounding and those businesses recovering. The only way is up. It is fantastic.

After reconnecting with the world in March 2022, the tourism sector in WA is returning bigger than ever. The latest statistics from Tourism Research Australia show that for the year ending September 2022, 10.5 million overnight domestic and international visitors travelled to and within WA. The same figures show the number of international visitors heading to WA is at 84 per cent of pre-COVID levels, meaning our state’s tourism industry continues to recover and grow further. Pleasingly, our latest monthly statistics from February 2023 show our interstate tourism sector is absolutely thriving, with around 1 650 interstate flights into WA, which is 102 per cent of the pre-COVID figure.

One of the key reasons that visitors are flocking to our state is our blockbuster calendar of events. Major tourism events such as festivals, sporting events and conventions can generate significant economic value for both the host destination and the wider region. The events attract large numbers of visitors who spend money on transportation, accommodation, food and drink, souvenirs, and other goods and services. Obviously, this spending in turn creates jobs and income for local businesses and residents. Obviously, as locals, we also benefit greatly from a packed calendar of events. Having a fantastic program of sporting, cultural and entertainment options contributes to the overall vitality and vibrancy of our city and our state, making it a great place to live, and attracting people to make Western Australia their home.

One of the most important economic benefits of major tourism is the creation of jobs. People often think of those jobs as being linked to just the short-term impacts of events. Events obviously require a range of services, from event planning and management to security and catering, which are often short-term jobs. However, major events ideally also generate long-term opportunities through the attraction of new businesses to the area as a result of a strong program of repeat or varied events. Significant economic and infrastructure development opportunities also stem from major events. The convention centres that are built to host major events obviously create demand for the construction industries. Members might recall the State Reception Centre, which was built for the 2011 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. That infrastructure project at Kings Park involved the replacement of a tent-like marquee with a permanent high-quality facility that now hosts a restaurant and function centre. That venue is available to host big receptions, weddings, dinners and major events. The member for Mirrabooka spoke about the event at that venue that she and I went to last week, at which I had the privilege of representing the Deputy Premier and launching the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre’s latest report in its BCEC Focus on Industry series, titled *Go your own WA*. At that event, the member for Mirrabooka gave us a great overview of the key findings in that report. It was a fascinating experience.

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I lived in New South Wales during the 1990s and I recall the major infrastructure boom associated with the 2000 Sydney Olympics, with the installation of new rail and bus lines, stadiums, aquatic and equestrian facilities, and housing precincts. There was also a general freshening up of the entire city. That included arrows that had been painted on the streets of Sydney telling people to look right, to make sure that the American tourists would look in both directions for traffic before they stepped out and risked severely injuring themselves. The whole city got a workover. It was remarkable how transformative that event was.

The Sydney Olympics was a phenomenal event. I spent a lot of it in the Dutch supporters' tent, which was sponsored by Heineken. That was a remarkable experience. I wore a lot of orange, in addition to a lot of green and gold. The Sydney Olympics was not only a city-changing event but also benefited the whole state. The legacy pieces of infrastructure that were constructed for that event remain to this day and are a good indication of the economic benefits that can be delivered through the hosting of major events. Major events often also spur the development of pop-up precincts with new businesses and restaurants around the facilities that have been developed for those events.

Post-COVID, Tourism WA has been sponsoring a diverse calendar of events to drive tourism and showcase Perth as a global events capital. These events aim to profile Western Australia to key international markets and restore visitation to pre-COVID levels. We have had recent success in doing that. The member for Mirrabooka mentioned the Ultimate Fighting Championship 284 event. Although that event might not have been popular in Mirrabooka, I can tell members that it was very popular in Ellenbrook.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Ms J.J. SHAW: I am told it was popular in Girrawheen as well—packed! That event brought 9 000 out-of-state visitors into Perth and showcased WA to the UFC's massive global social media and pay-to-view audience from around 172 countries. That event was so popular that it broke the national arena revenue record that had been set by the Rolling Stones. Mick Jagger might have a thing or two to say about that, but UFC is bigger than Mick. It set a new sporting attendance record for RAC Arena.

The Western Australian government has also secured and supported a number of other successful events that have attracted thousands of people from around the world, injected a significant amount of dollars into our economy, and promoted our state through media coverage. A particularly great example is the ICC Women's T20 World Cup. In February 2022, Perth hosted five group stage matches of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup tournament in a festival of cricket at the WACA ground. Nine of the 10 international women's cricket teams competed at that event in Perth. That included New Zealand, Sri Lanka, England, South Africa, the West Indies, Thailand and Bangladesh, and, of course, also the defending champions, Australia. The tournament was broadcast into our key tourism markets, including the United Kingdom, India and Asia. More than 5 280 cricket fans turned out for the double-header at the WACA in Perth on 24 February. The event, which featured Australia versus Sri Lanka, and India versus Bangladesh, broke the record for crowd numbers for a women's cricket match in Western Australia. To support the event, Tourism WA was actively involved in organising a fan walk from the WACA to Optus Stadium in the lead-up to the first match. About 360 people from nine different cultural groups representing the nine international teams that were taking part in the competition participated in that event. It included a T20 trophy tour with stops at iconic Western Australian tourism destinations, including Rottnest Island. That helps to encourage the dreaming theme, because when it makes social media around the world people look at these incredible destinations and say, "Wow! I'd really love to go there." In fact, Minister Templeman and I were at Rottnest to participate in the AFL grand final cup's grand tour of Western Australia.

Another significant event that Western Australia has hosted is the Bledisloe Cup. I know that rugby is a big deal in Western Australia. More than 61 000 fans flocked to the Bledisloe Cup match in August 2019. That set an attendance record for a sporting event at Optus Stadium, although it was not quite as big as the audience for the Ed Sheeran concert. Close to 7 400 visitors from outside WA came to Perth to witness the Wallabies defeat their traditional rivals the All Blacks. The total spend by visiting rugby fans was more than \$12.5 million. The game was broadcast to around 280 million people worldwide, including, again, our key tourism markets of New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Japan. The success of that event saw it return to Optus Stadium in September 2021 when COVID-19 restrictions were in place. Western Australia's world-leading response to the pandemic meant that locals had the privilege of seeing international sport in their home state, with the event held in front of a largely intrastate crowd of more 52 700 people.

When it comes to regional events, we also have the Shinju Matsuri Festival in Broome, which is supported through Tourism WA's regional events program. I had the great privilege of attending that event in September 2021. It was actually also my birthday.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Yes, I know! I saw you having a very good time there.

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Ms J.J. SHAW: I should say that Minister Templeman was also there, chauffeuring his principal policy adviser and me around Broome. We also had the great privilege of seeking out Minister Dawson, who was also in Broome for that event. It was absolutely fantastic.

Shinju Matsuri is one of the longest running events in Western Australia, having celebrated its fifty-first anniversary in 2021. The festival name means “Festival of the Pearl”. The festival plays an important role in celebrating Broome’s rich pearling history, multicultural community and extraordinary landscapes. All the events in the festival’s 2021 program sold out ahead of time, with the majority of tickets sold to out-of-region visitors. It was attended by 20 000 people, who went to more than 50 events over the festival’s two-week period, and provided close to \$7.5 million in valuable economic impact, as well as creating jobs for the Kimberley region.

The Kimberley also hosts the Ord Valley Muster, which is East Kimberley’s biggest festival. It is also funded through Tourism WA’s regional events program, and has been since 2008. The 2021 Ord Valley Muster was the twentieth. It had a strong focus on Aboriginal performers and cultural experiences.

The Aviair HeliSpirit Kimberley Moon Experience featured an entirely Aboriginal line-up, which was fantastic, headlined by Jessica Mauboy. There was a welcome to country at all events and a high representation of Aboriginal artists at the inaugural Art in the Park event. The 2021 festival recorded its highest ever turnout with 11 400 people attending over nine days. Close to 2 300 people travelled to the event from outside the Kimberley region, generating thousands of visitor nights for local accommodation providers and injecting \$5.3 million into the local economy. Tourism WA has committed to support that event through the regional events program until 2023.

I mentioned the Toyota AFL grand final—a phenomenal event for Western Australia when Perth hosted the AFL grand final for the first time. It was only the second time that the AFL grand final had been played outside Victoria in the game’s 124-year history. It would be good if the AFL considered serving all the other states and territories that support AFL football. The AFL grand final should not just be held in Victoria every year; it should travel to the other states. We are great supporters of the AFL here in the west. I am looking forward to the Dockers bringing home the “Flagmantle” for 2023.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): Member, you’re younger. You’ve probably got a better chance than I have.

Ms J.J. SHAW: We came so close.

Mr R.H. Cook: No, we didn’t! We got flogged within the first 25 minutes.

Ms J.J. SHAW: Can we live in hope, Deputy Premier? Give us a glimmer of hope. We are long-suffering fans.

It would be lovely to have another AFL grand final here in WA. If we demonstrated one thing, it is that this town knows how to support an event like that and certainly knows how to party!

Mr P.J. Rundle: It will be 2057. Most of us will be dead by then.

Ms J.J. SHAW: Member for Roe, who is your team? Show us your colours. Are you an Eagles supporter?

Mr P.J. Rundle: I am, actually.

[Member’s time extended.]

Ms J.J. SHAW: My commiserations to the member for Roe for being such an avid Eagles supporter.

Mr P.J. Rundle: No, that’s when the next AFL grand final is potentially held in Western Australia, or it might be in 2059 I think. We’re a long way away from having it back in WA.

Ms J.J. SHAW: That is such a shame. It is a missed opportunity. It is the sort of event that if we program appropriately, it would fall within the auspices of this Major Events Bill. Let us hope the Victorians get their act together and have a change of heart so some sort of arrangement can be made.

Mr P.J. Rundle: They have got their act together; that’s why WA won’t get it back again.

Ms J.J. SHAW: Again, we can live in hope—like having a Dockers premiership.

In the lead-up to the AFL grand final, Tourism WA did a whole heap of activation and marketing support to ensure that the Perth CBD and hospitality businesses really benefited from us holding that event and that our drawcards were on full display to the nation during that long weekend. There was city dressing and a trip to Rotto for the cup—is it a trophy or a cup, Robyn?

Mrs R.M.J. Clarke: A cup—the AFL cup.

Ms J.J. SHAW: You are an Eagles supporter. Pipe down over there!

Mrs R.M.J. Clarke: We've got four of them. We know.

Ms J.J. SHAW: I know, but it will be a while before you see your next one!

There was a giant Sherrin football on Matagarup Bridge creating a focal point for the grand final theme, with social posts from the public and Perth signage on Optus Stadium's surface promoting the city to a national audience of 3.8 million who watched the broadcast.

The Western Australian government is really committed to building on these successes and amplifying the tourism sector in WA because it is a key economic driver for our state. To achieve this, a record budget commitment of \$167 million was dedicated to Tourism WA as part of the 2022–23 state budget. It included \$31 million to attract additional major events and business events to WA, \$21 million for a two-year marketing boost internationally and interstate and \$18 million for a national park tourism experiences development package. All these additional funds are being used to attract more visitors, support local businesses and operators and boost the economy to create jobs and secure more business and investment opportunities. The \$167 million budget commitment was in addition to the Reconnect WA package, which included \$195 million in support for tourism, including a boost for interstate tourism, aviation, working holiday makers and international students. Before the pandemic, the tourism industry in WA accounted for nearly 100 000 jobs and \$13.5 billion in visitor spend to the state's economy, including almost \$6 billion into the regions. Our plan is to not only return to, but also exceed these figures. All these initiatives and all this funding will help WA become the most desirable choice for visitors and further grow our visitor economy in a sustainable manner.

Given that I have a little time remaining, I briefly mention that we have these major events. I have spoken at length about major events, but I think it is important to also focus on the dispersal impact that these events can have—the ways in which these events drive people once they come here for an AFL grand final or anything really and then move out to the outer metropolitan regions. It is often a bit of a joke in caucus because I am in the peri-urban fringe and we are special in the peri-urban fringe. I have the great privilege of representing an electorate that has a footprint of some 1 500 square kilometres that takes in the Swan Valley and the Perth hills. I have the great privilege of sharing the beautiful Perth hills region with the members for Kalamunda and Darling Range and the Swan Valley with the member for West Swan. We all work together to talk about tourism and event initiatives that can be significantly impacted by major events in the city. We need to make people visiting the City of Perth aware of these regions and events, and then draw them out. A lot of people in the metropolitan area may not be aware of some of the fantastic community events that are going on. Even if they are not from interstate or overseas but are based in Belmont or Victoria Park, or even if they want to come up from Collie, they can come to the hills and experience some of these incredible events.

I want to mention some of these events because they were founded by some absolutely incredible local community members. In Mt Helena, we have the incredible Whim Festival. Whim is not only an idle, happy thought; it is also a piece of logging equipment. Mt Helena was originally a logging area. In fact, Sawyers Valley, the little community next door, is named after the sawmill that used to be there. The Whim Festival is a community festival. The whole idea is that we draw people to the hills to celebrate our history. There is a vintage festival at which everyone dresses up in costume. In fact, the Deputy Premier has been to the Whim Festival in Mt Helena with me. The festival is run in conjunction with the Hills Billy Cart Festival, which the Deputy Premier may remember.

Mr R.H. Cook: I do. I've never seen anything more terrifying in my life. I was going to reserve part of my response to the second reading contributions to talk about the billy cart festival.

Ms J.J. SHAW: The Hills Billy Cart Festival is another Mt Helena initiative. It started before I was a member of Parliament. When I was a member of the Mt Helena Residents and Ratepayers Progress Association, the president of the association at the time said, "Let's have a billy cart festival." We have some quite steep hills in Mt Helena, as the name would suggest. The idea was that we would run a billy cart festival, echoing days of old, and encourage local kids to build their own billy carts and then pelt down the really steep hills. What could possibly go wrong!

Mr R.H. Cook: Well, I saw lots go wrong.

Ms J.J. SHAW: It is a great event. Since the inaugural one that the Deputy Premier opened, I have subsequently quite heavily sponsored safety barriers and safety equipment. This festival is huge now. It draws thousands of people up to the hills and into Mt Helena. Minister Templeman has also been to the Hills Billy Cart Festival. I drag everyone I possibly can up to Mt Helena. It is a great family day.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Is it on again now at this time of the year?

Ms J.J. SHAW: We have changed it to April. We are not going to have it this year; instead, we will have it next April. It is an absolutely fantastic event. It draws people up to the hills, puts bums on seats in the cafes in the local area and showcases what a great little community Mt Helena is. I want to tip my hat to the fabulous organising committee of Hills Billy Carts Inc.

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Mr D.A. Templeman: They have very inventive carts.

Ms J.J. SHAW: Yes, there are some fantastic ones. There is a prize every year for the most elaborately decorated cart. There really are some absolutely fantastic examples.

Mr R.H. Cook: The carts are all very different, but they are all equally dangerous!

Mr D.A. Templeman: They are. Some of them are made of balsawood and held together by a bit of Blu-Tack. It's very interesting. It's like a birdman rally on wheels.

Ms J.J. SHAW: We hillbillies are known for our daredevil stunts!

Mrs R.M.J. Clarke: Are there banjos playing?

Ms J.J. SHAW: There actually are banjos! There are some absolutely fantastic musicians up in the hills and there is a stage for live acts, and the local school gets involved. It is a fabulous community event, so members should please keep an eye out and like my Facebook page —

Mr D.A. Templeman: It's the sort of place that the Sensitive New Age Cowpersons would go to!

Ms J.J. SHAW: Oh dear! The Mt Helena Hills Billy Cart Festival—be there!

We also have the Steel Bumper Car Cruise and the Kansas City BBQ Festival in Chidlow, which is absolutely fabulous and organised by the Chidlow Tavern. We have our own music festival, Gidgestock Music Festival, which is a couple of days of music and fun. We have the Gidge Show and our Small Farm Field Day. We have fabulous local events. In the Swan Valley, we have our Harvest festival and the Spring in the Valley event. A whole heap of large music events are hosted throughout the Swan Valley at venues like Nikola Estate, Upper Reach Winery and Belvoir Amphitheatre. In fact, recently, as part of the Perth Festival, I went to the Bon Iver concert and it was absolutely fantastic. It is a wonderful venue. It has this incredibly dramatic quarry-type arrangement with seats cut into it. It is perched on the Darling scarp in part of my electorate and overlooks the City of Perth. Truly, it is the most beautiful electorate in all of Western Australia. Visiting these events, people can sit there on the hills, see the beautiful Swan Valley and look over the city and enjoy all that Western Australia has to offer.

As I say, visitation is driven by major events. These major events are complex and difficult to run. Our experience has shown that they can require multiple approval processes and have to contend with multiple agencies and levels of government. If we are going to be competitive in attracting major events, reform is required, hence the need for this bill.

Our tourism sector is a key part of our economy and it is a really exciting time to be working in the sector as both a parliamentary secretary and a local member for an electorate where tourism is such a key part of the local economy. Examples of past events of such scale and scope that they might attract coverage under this legislation include the International Cricket Council Cricket World Cup, the Rugby League World Cup, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and *The Giants*, which we all saw as part of the Perth International Arts Festival and was incredible. The FIFA Women's World Cup is coming up. I understand that this bill will be key to facilitating that event, providing yet another opportunity for us to showcase Western Australia to the world and drive tourism. I cannot wait to see the other world-class events that will be facilitated by this bill. I want to see an AFL grand final with the Dockers in it. I will take one anywhere in Australia—Perth, Melbourne, wherever! I particularly want to see visitation driven to Perth, but then dispersed out into the peri-urban fringe and out to the regions. This bill will be key to that and I commend it to the house.

MS J.L. HANNS (Collie–Preston — Parliamentary Secretary) [1.14 pm]: I rise to contribute to the very important Major Events Bill 2023. I had prepared this amazing speech about the bill and all the intricacies of its clauses, but the member for Swan Hills has inspired me so much that first I am going to focus on a couple of things that I would like her to know about. Minister for Tourism, I promise that I will get to the core of the bill, but please indulge me for a moment. I was very interested to hear about the member's event with the bilycarts, which was —

Ms J.J. Shaw: The Hills Billy Cart Festival.

Ms J.L. HANNS: The Hills Billy Cart Festival.

Ms J.J. Shaw: It'll travel to Collie if you want it to!

Ms J.L. HANNS: No, no. I think I might have one to rival the member's. We have a fabulous group in a beautiful town in my electorate called Donnybrook. The Donnybrook Town Team was responsible for this incredible project held in the last couple of weeks called the Dunny Do-over. It had a very run-down local government facility with toilets and change rooms and it decided to create a mural to brighten the area. The mural was unveiled clearly, but there was also a whole day of festivities, including, along with the Dunny Do-over mural, a dunny cart race. Community groups around my electorate built dunny carts. The only proviso was that the cart had to have a toilet seat and it was in. I am very pleased to announce that the Collie Police and Community Youth Centre took out

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first place in the dunny cart race. Minister Papalia and I were on hand to see the carts being built at the Collie PCYC during a recent visit, so I think, member for Swan Hills, we could get our heads together and come up with some kind of fusion or hybrid billycart–dunny cart race.

Ms J.J. Shaw: You're on!

Ms J.L. HANNS: Let us talk anyhoo.

The really exciting thing about this bill is the focus on Western Australia becoming a major events destination. It is incredible that with this legislation, we will be able to make sure that events are declared major events when they are required to be so declared and that those events facilitate a huge number of opportunities for Western Australia, particularly in social outcomes and, very importantly, economic outcomes. Those events are the drivers of a huge range of benefits for Western Australia.

I want to also look a little bit at the commercial interests part of this legislation. It will be really important once this bill is passed and becomes law to have the ability to declare a particular event a major event. The people who bear the costs of delivering these events need to make sure that their costs are covered. Protecting the commercial interests of event organisers is incredibly important in the success of an event.

Obviously, the events that may be classified as major events can be sporting, cultural, political or economic events. The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting is a good example. Taking into account the size, importance and social and economic benefits of the event will help shape what events will be declared as major events for Western Australia.

We have a number of event locations around Western Australia that would benefit from some events being declared major events, including the Bendat Basketball Centre. The Minister for Sport and Recreation will be well familiar with the large range of places, including RAC Arena, Perth Motorplex and the like. Obviously, under the arts and culture portfolio, there are places like His Majesty's Theatre and the Subiaco Arts Centre and, importantly for me as a regional member, places in regional areas such as the Albany Entertainment Centre. Events in the regions will also be able to be declared major events under this legislation. That will mean that the social and economic benefits will travel with the event right across Western Australia to the regional areas. There are some outstanding opportunities. The member for Swan Hills mentioned the Shinju Matsuri Festival and the Ord Muster. They are already delivering major economic benefits.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Crab Fest is on this weekend!

Ms J.L. HANNS: Crab Fest for Mandurah, of course! Very good. The member for Mandurah will be there, I am sure.

I want to talk a little bit about my experience of travelling recently to London. I knew it was going to be New Year's Eve while we were in London, but at the time I booked I had no idea that the New Year's Eve festivities had not been attended in the flesh by people—although they had been broadcast—since, I believe, 2019. COVID had impacted events and things in London.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Boris had a party but he got into trouble!

Ms J.L. HANNS: Yes, of course, but we will not mention that!

My experience in London on New Year's Eve builds a vision for me of what could be possible for Western Australia. In London on New Year's Eve Big Ben tolls 12 times. That is pretty incredible because the sound goes through London. Once that last bell stops, the fireworks erupt. I think there were 12 000 fireworks in that location last year. Hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people visited the centre of London for this spectacular event. A very comprehensive traffic and transport, and safety and crowd control, management plan had to be established, and this brings me to our bill.

This bill will make sure that what happened to me in London on New Year's Eve will not happen here in Western Australia. I will explain the night we went to the fireworks. We travelled outside of the borough we were staying in to a restaurant. There was a party and a DJ. I had my 18-year-old daughter there, so it was all very fun. Then we travelled back on the tube to our hotel, which is where we had prime viewing for the event. Unbeknownst to me, it was a ticketed event and the barricades around the whole of the City of London had gone up while we were out for dinner. When we came back and tried to get to our hotel to change and go to where we could see the fireworks, we unfortunately did not have tickets to get past the barricade. This legislation will make sure that does not happen because entry points to events and movements within them will be very closely monitored. The police will be able to enter the event at points other than those dedicated to entry. There potentially will be entry charges to a major event declared anywhere in this location of Western Australia. Ticketing would obviously be limited to people who had purchased them. Again, I allude to the restriction on broadcasting and recording of the major events. In

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London it was not explained to us as tourists that the event would be locked down only to purchasers of tickets. We did not have a ticket, but the hotel we were staying at was inside the barricades. We had to lobby the local bobbies to let us in and luckily the swipe card for my hotel had its name on it, which is unusual—not a lot of places do that anymore. That was the only way I could prove I was staying in that hotel to get in.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Otherwise, you would have been wandering the streets of London!

Ms J.L. HANNS: Otherwise, I would have been wandering the streets of London! I am sure I could have found something to entertain myself in the wee hours of 1 January 2023.

The capital city of London came alive with that fireworks spectacular. It was interesting that the very next day all those restrictions stayed in place because there was a two-day festival in London. That festival fell within the plans that had been put through the City of London to run a major event on the following day after the fireworks. That event was a New Year's Day parade, and the parade went through the streets of London. It was something I had never seen. I thought it was pretty incredible. Basically, people have to nominate to be part of the street festival.

I will share some of the information on what the street festival looked like and the fact that those restrictions for the fireworks prior to New Year's Day stayed in place. There were 546 United States TV stations broadcasting the London New Year's Day parade. It was incredible to think that the US was interested. When I looked further into this, I found that the US sends representatives to participate in the parade. Eighty per cent of households in the United Kingdom watched the New Year's Day parade, and from the numbers that were there, a lot of them certainly attended as well. One thousand global TV stations carried the event in its entirety. It reached 300 million people globally. *BBC Breakfast* live, BBC One, Sky News and London Live all had exclusive rights to that broadcast. It was live streamed by 15 000 news organisations, including the *Mirror*, *Express*, *Daily Star*, *OK Magazine* and other associated press and print media as well. There was a social media reach of 586 000 between December and January finding out about the London New Year's Day parade. The really interesting thing for me was that a borough competition was run, so each of the boroughs in London could nominate to be part of the parade. Each borough had to develop a float for the parade and shared in a pot of £37 000 of prizes. The winning boroughs got to choose which charity they donated it to. It was an incredible whole-of-community event, and I thought it was amazing. The first prize went to the borough of Redbridge, and it donated its money to the King George and Queen's Hospitals Charity. Westminster borough donated to the Paddington Arts and Harrow borough donated to Harrow Carers young carers and Northwick Park Hospital dialysis and renal care. It is an incredible community-led parade that brought significant benefits to a major event.

To give an idea of the scale of this event, in the parade there were marching bands, brass bands and, as an example, the London Pearly Kings and Queens Society. That is a community group that people can belong to if they wear pearls of any sort, or tiaras, necklaces or whatever. That is how people belong to the London Pearly Kings and Queens Society. The London and Surrey Mini Owners Club had a particularly notable display, in my humble opinion. There was Downers Grove North High School from Illinois, USA. As I said, a huge number of schools travelled from the US to the United Kingdom for this event. I really noticed that that New Year's Eve–New Year's Day event brought a huge number of international visitors to London, particularly through this partnership with the US. Every second person I spoke to in London had an American accent. It was an incredible opportunity for tourism in the UK. Reflecting on that, those opportunities for major events that we design and promote in Western Australia also have the potential to deliver some of these amazing benefits, if we look at those examples.

The member for Swan Hills also talked about the football grand final, which was held in Perth in 2021. I must say that I had the pleasure of being in Perth. I did not get tickets to the grand final in 2021. As a West Coast Eagles member, I was very offended by that.

Mr R.H. Cook: Eagles members are often easily offended!

Ms J.L. HANNS: Deputy Premier, my word! I offer to speak on this bill as a favour to the Deputy Premier and he offends me in the chamber! Good Lord!

Several members interjected.

Ms J.L. HANNS: As a proud Eagles member —

Mrs R.M.J. Clarke: Hear, hear!

Ms J.L. HANNS: Thank you, member for Murray–Wellington. I knew I would have allies in this place. I have travelled to Melbourne several times for a grand final—once in 2005 when the West Coast Eagles lost to Sydney by one point and then in 2006 when the Eagles won against Sydney by one point. I have had the opportunity to experience major events Melbourne-style and I can say that Western Australia does it equally well in the events we stage.

I want to mention quickly the scope and opportunities for events in Western Australia. I am a child of the 1970s. I was born in the 70s and grew up as a teenager in the 80s. We had that amazing event called Live Aid that was

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broadcast simultaneously from Los Angeles and London. I looked at Voyager’s film clip for *Promise*. That band is representing Western Australia —

Ms H.M. Beazley: That is my nephew’s band.

Ms J.L. HANNS: The member’s nephew’s band? Gee—we are full of talent, aren’t we!

The film clip for the single that the band will perform at Eurovision 2023 features some incredible locations around Western Australia, particularly in Kalbarri National Park, with Nature’s Window, and, I think, Hutt Lagoon. It gave me the idea that if money were no object to the Minister for Culture and the Arts or the Minister for Tourism, potentially we would have the ability to simultaneously broadcast people such as Ed Sheeran and Harry Styles from iconic Western Australian locations and live beam that across the world. We do not think small in Collie. We have the biggest dam mural in Australia and in the world. With big ideas, big things are possible. With this legislation, we can be in a prime position to look at major events and the major events industry and to support all the amazing people who work in those industries as well. Importantly, we will have the legislation to support the event organisers. I commend the bill to the house.

MS M. BEARD (North West Central) [1.32 pm]: I rise as the shadow Minister for Tourism and the lead speaker for the opposition on the Major Events Bill 2023. I would like to note that my absence from the house earlier was because I was attending an Office of the Auditor General’s presentation for new members, so I thought that was important to attend.

I have listened to everything that has been said about this bill since I have been in the house and I understand that the flavour of my speech will be exactly the same. Essentially, this bill will allow the declaration of major events and delegates responsibility to an authorised body. With this will come greater power and greater responsibility. However, the opposition thinks it is important that it will significantly cut red tape and will make WA far more attractive to international events. The importance of events cannot be underestimated. When someone is asked what tourism is, they think about generic tourism. Everyone is in tourism—the mechanic is in tourism and the hairdresser is in tourism. They do not see themselves as being in tourism, but they are. That is something we can work on as a state.

I am sure there is acknowledgement that there are major events that will not consider coming to WA unless this legislation is passed. I imagine that is across the board. There is a time-critical factor in processing this legislation, and that is important. Everyone would be in agreement with the notion of a framework to support major events in WA that will need to be prescribed by the minister as a major event. The opposition is keen to get a better understanding of exactly what determines a major event or how an event is categorised or determined as such. For example, the upcoming solar eclipse seems to be a major event in the eyes of many people. Is that an example of something that may be considered as a major event, given that it will go across multiple councils and an enormous geographical distance? From what I have read, I understand that the Tourism Council WA called for a tourism events and activation act to streamline approvals for significant state events, attractions and sustainable tourism development. It seems that the legislation does not quite fit what the council asked for in 2021, but, clearly, it is a step in the right direction.

I asked the minister yesterday whether he was the Minister for Tourism or the minister for tourism and events. Obviously, that is very broad and generic, but it was a conversation I had had with myself when I read through this legislation. Events is an enormous part of that tourism portfolio. I ask the minister to provide clarity around who is responsible for the bill. I understand he has clarified that it is the tourism minister.

Western Australia is a diverse and unique state that offers endless opportunities in the tourism space with something for everyone. I have been in tourism in the north west for a long time and I know people often get to Western Australia, particularly from the large international market, and say, “We went to the east first, Sydney and Melbourne, because we thought that was what Australia was.” When they get to Western Australia and go past Jurien Bay and hit the outback—the raw, dry and sometimes desolate landscape—that is what they imagine Australia to be. They find it intriguing. It is raw and it is real. I believe we have something for everyone here. We have open spaces, freedom, rugged outback landscapes and rolling green landscapes in the south. There is always something to climb. There is a mix of ocean and outback experiences and they are relatively close in proximity by our standards—maybe not by some of the international people’s standards. They struggle with the distances, but obviously once they are in Australia, they understand. Western Australia has multiple heritage sites. In the south west experiences there is a broad mix of opportunities for tourism in WA, some of which we take for granted. Visitors in the north see emus in the main streets of Shark Bay and Exmouth and kangaroos on the golf course at Joondalup. That is what they do not expect. Obviously, the quokkas at Rottnest are a major drawcard, too. Getting people here is probably the biggest challenge for some because of the distances. For me, the attraction of events coming to the state will be the catalyst to change that and to get people into Perth and, as the member said previously, to disperse them through the regions, which I think is really important.

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We have the diversity as well. We have products coming online in the north. There are some fabulous station stays for anyone heading north. Wooramel River Retreat and Bullara station in the Exmouth–Gascoyne region are amazing attractions for international people in particular, as is Mt Augustus. Interestingly, when I was home two weeks ago, I had a conversation with two German ladies who were in a four-wheel drive camper and wanted to go to Mt Augustus. It was 35 degrees in Carnarvon. I asked where they were going and whether they had enough water. They said they were going to Mt Augustus, where it was probably about 55 degrees in the shade. I said, “Do you know how hot it is? Should you be going there at this time of year?” The response was, “Do you go to our country in the snow?” I said, “Yes.” Their response was that was why they were going there. As scary as it is in places like that, some of the international tourists are very adventurous and our state has a lot to offer in that space.

There is also a lot of history and heritage in our state. People can see a number of different things. We have the burrowing bees in the north, which David Attenborough did a story on. In my patch we have the overseas telecommunication dish, which was significant when man was put on the moon. The solar eclipse will occur and these icons will link in to that event. International tourists will come to Western Australia and they will hook into those natural landscapes and things that they will find attractive. There are wind festivals that interest a large overseas contingent of windsurfers and people who travel our coastline.

There are already a lot of events in our regions and across the state. A lot of those are run at a local level. They can be a little market on a main street right through to a massive event. Next weekend in Exmouth, we will have GAMEX, which starts on Friday and goes for a week. We have the Gascoyne Dash, which is the longest off-road race, through the outback, of 300 kilometres over two days. Obviously, we have the solar eclipse coming up. We also have food tourism. The south west is awash with it and the north also has a lot of food tourism and long-table lunches. There is a lot to offer people who are coming in, and, as I say, the events will be the catalyst for that if we can get the numbers of people into WA.

A previous member mentioned football and that is interesting because any events like football attract people to the city from not only overseas, but also the regions. Towns empty out when something significant is on, be it the Eagles or West Coast Fever. People will travel and spend a lot of money in Perth and the metro area. The CBD has struggled with a lack of spending over time, and since COVID, it has been a challenge. But travel spending has clearly been of help to the city because a lot of people base themselves there when they come down to Perth. Having said that, the member made the comment about being able to push people out to the regions if events are hosted in the city. Being able to maximise that opportunity and get people out into the regions is crucial, as is taking that next step to maximise the experience of those people who are coming in.

People say that distance is one of our greatest challenges, but others see it as an opportunity. We are a vast state, and the challenge is how accessible are the regions, but, in turn, the regions are also what we make of it and how we market it. Over time, we will get better at that, and if we have big events coming in, it will just become something that we do.

One of my observations during the Wander Out Yonder campaign was that many people had not been north of Joondalup and it was a culture shock for them. When they went north, they assumed that it would be just like Dunsborough, when in actual fact, in lots of cases, it was the complete opposite. The first tranche of people who came through were horrified, in some cases, and they found it hard to grapple with the fact that the internet did not work properly or the services and facilities were just not there. As time went on, we moved away from the turning point of COVID and people now come back and they are very understanding, especially about the fact that we do not have a lot of staff in this state. I have noticed that people have gone from asking for their table to be cleared to bringing their dishes up and leaving them at a central point. It is interesting how our mindset can change, and that is important when we think about how we market our tourism products and those experiences because there is a lot to be said for how we turn those perceptions around.

Events are an important part of our communities no matter how small or large they are. We all remember going to events. The Move concert down on the foreshore in the 1980s rings a bell for me. It might have been one of the first concerts that happened there, and we thought it was fantastic.

Mr R.H. Cook: Maybe, member, that’s like Woodstock. If you could remember it!

Ms M. BEARD: Yes! My kids are now constant festival goers and they are always looking for events. It is something that has become part of their DNA. We have music festivals and the international balloon festival. Championships are looking at doing events here. With Perth being the gateway to the rest of the state, we have an important opportunity to maximise events for the rest of the region. As I said before, if we can leverage the regions socially and economically, it will improve the overall vibrancy of our state. It will improve jobs, and it will flow through to our economy and our communities and add to the prosperity of our state.

In 2018–19, tourism’s contribution to the WA economy was \$12 billion. There was a drop in 2020–21 of about 45 per cent, and there are lots of reasons for that. I was fortunate enough to go to the Sydney Olympics and I have

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travelled to international events. I remember going to America and, as we are talking about putting an event into a space, Americans used one part of Indianapolis for a single event. The competitors' dining room was the ice-skating rink and the merchandise tent was in the park. That is just an example of a significant event and it worked very well. It was really clear to me, many years ago, how much of an impact that had on Indianapolis at the time, with so many people in that space. The Sydney Olympics was an example of that, as was the Adelaide grand prix when it was there. It is the same situation. It had a big footprint across the city. It was a vibrant city, and it was something that international travellers and Australian travellers really enjoyed.

One of the other aspects that is really important for Western Australia, and one that I believe we have the opportunity to lead from the front, is the Indigenous tourism products that we have. In Western Australia, they are growing quickly. In my own area we have the Gwoonwardu Mia Gascoyne Aboriginal Heritage and Cultural Centre, which has reopened. It is fabulous. It is just about to start some training programs with some young people in the town, re-engaging with people. Darren "Capes" Capewell in Shark Bay is a stalwart of the industry. He is a great mentor for many of the people coming through with his Wula Gura Nyinda Eco Cultural Adventures. We have a new tour. Rennee Turner has just started the Wooramulla Eco Cultural Journeys, and she is forging a pathway forward, as is Hazel Walgar who is leading the Baiyungu Dreaming tours along the Ningaloo Coast. I have had fabulous feedback from these tours, particularly from international people. International people are looking for this product and we have an amazing opportunity in this state to offer it when others cannot. It is important to nurture these businesses. The events that we are hoping to attract will contribute significantly to this effort.

It has been difficult to navigate the upcoming total solar eclipse from an operational and cost perspective because it will be so large. It will be over multiple councils, and I suspect that it might be a major event. It is a natural event. We cannot stop it. Yesterday, I told the minister that I had a constituent come into the office and say, "Ma'am, I think we need to stop this event. It's just going to be too big and we won't cope." I had to say to him that I was very sorry but this event cannot be stopped. The solar eclipse may be an example for which some of the provisions in this bill will be useful.

We understand that visitation is down and spend is up and that may well be attributed to inflation. Some of the hotels have picked up some of the fly-in fly-out workers. I have been staying in hotels at times and they have permanents there who come and go. They have a booking and they say, "See you in two weeks." Those places have plugged the short-term accommodation gap in the tourism market. Obviously, that will change if we have people come in from overseas, and demand for short-term accommodation will increase. I am confident that we will bounce back, and I am really pleased that we can attract some big international events. Unfortunately, natural disasters seem to play a significant role in WA's tourism landscape. Cyclone Seroja set the north back a bit, as did the Kimberley floods. But to the credit of the tourism businesses that operate in this state, their resilience is remarkable and I congratulate everyone on that. It has been a long journey, over the last few years, in every aspect of tourism throughout the state. In the north, the Kimberley obviously has a way to go yet. With the Fitzroy River being the gateway from the east, it is going to cause some issues for everyone else further down the line, such as those people who come through the top of the state and go out through Esperance. Hopefully, they will decide to go the other way and we will find another pathway for them.

As a whole, the bill will enable development and growth within our tourism industry, and I hope that from a regional perspective we can leverage as much as we can off that. I look forward to clarifying with the minister some of the queries that I have in consideration in detail.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [1.49 pm]: I would like to make a very brief contribution to the debate on the Major Events Bill 2023 to allow the Acting Speaker to perhaps also make a contribution by vacating the chair.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): I need to find someone to quickly get in my seat!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I think this is a great bill and I fully endorse it. During my short time in tourism, I was able to make some contribution towards its development. It is also important to note that the Arts and Culture Trust Act is now in place, which allows the Arts and Culture Trust to undertake a range of measures similar to those contained in this bill. In fact, the bill before the house today draws on a number of the elements of the Arts and Culture Trust Act, which was put through this place last year. With those few words, which I think have been a major contribution to the debate on this bill, I will —

The ACTING SPEAKER: I can see the member for Cockburn; he might be able to sit in my seat for a minute, if he would not mind.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I agree with the speakers who highlighted the opportunities that will now exist as a result of this bill. Obviously, the minister has already planned for the extravaganza down in Fremantle as part of the Bon Scott arrangements, which will be wonderful.

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Mr R.H. Cook: High Voltage.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The High Voltage festival announcement, which will see a significant part of Fremantle activated for that very important acknowledgement of a great Western Australian musician and the contribution that AC/DC made to our cultural history.

MS M.M. QUIRK (Landsdale) [1.51 pm]: I thank the Leader of the House for stretching. I have been inspired by him and some of the other speakers today, and I of course support the Major Events Bill 2023. I was intending to talk in unfavourable terms about an event that I attended at a winery, which I will not name, but that is a grudge. I will save my grudges for St Patrick's Day, because as we know, those of Irish heritage are great at bearing grudges.

I want to talk about a survey I got yesterday from the City of Perth about the branding of Perth. Of course, branding goes hand in hand with conducting major events. The Lord Mayor seems to be absolutely fixed on the name "City of Light". I have a number of problems with this. The first is that many people who might be minded to travel to Perth will not remember that in 1962, when astronauts flew over Perth, John Glenn—I stand to be corrected—said, "Oh, look; we can see Perth." There would have been a black expanse for thousands of kilometres around Perth, and it stood out like a beacon. In those days, the Swan Brewery was also lit up with the sailing ship; some people will be old enough to remember that. The other reason I think that City of Light is inappropriate is that Paris already has it. Why would we have a brand name that has been taken for many, many years by Paris?

The tabloids around the place like to call Perth the meth capital or the nang capital, but maybe that is not appropriate, so I might share with members the branding of some other cities so that they can get their creative juices flowing. Melbourne was known as the "Athens of the South", but it has now embarked upon a major branding exercise and is now the big "M". Hong Kong is the "Pearl of the Orient", New York is the "Big Apple", LA is the "City of Angels", Singapore is the "Lion City" and Adelaide is the "City of Churches". How inappropriate is that with all those grisly murders? I do not know! London is the "Big Smoke", although it has done a lot to alleviate that issue, and Venice is the "Bride of the Sea", which was news to me when I hit Wikipedia this morning. That goes back to 1177. On the fortieth day after Easter, a special ceremony is held in which the city is married to the sea. I have to say that that branding exercise has not been overly successful! Boston is "Beantown", Chicago is the "Windy City", Las Vegas is "Sin City", Rome is the "Eternal City", Mumbai is the "City of Dreams" and Shanghai is "Magic City". Oslo is "Tiger Town", which is sort of odd considering it is a long way from the natural habitat of tigers, but I understand that there is a very large statue of a tiger there. Finally, Jaipur, which I have been privileged to have been to, is the "Pink City", because that signifies the pink buildings there.

What are we going to do about Perth? I did think "Sun City" was a good idea because we could just pinch that from Yanchep, but of course there is Sun City in South Africa. Then I thought, "Well, what is Perth renowned for?" We always get mentioned in the context of being remote or far away, so maybe something about getting away from it all by coming to Perth, or even getting away from everything! Perth has diversity and variety, and people can be out of the office for a long time. One thing that strikes me is that if you go to China and look up at the grey sky and you ask, "Is pollution bad?" they say, "No, no, no. That's not pollution; that is mist." We get told that heavy pollution in China is mist. I have met a few parliamentary delegations that have come here from China and they have been absolutely amazed by the sky; they suddenly realise that the sky is blue! We have a vast sky, so maybe it could be something along those lines. The other reason I think City of Light is inappropriate is that we do not have daylight saving here. Just when people are in a position to enjoy the light, it is bloody dark!

I know that Tourism WA might have some involvement in the branding as well, but I just make it absolutely clear to the Lord Mayor that if the city is going to send me a survey asking me what I think about the name "City of Light", I will say that I do not think it is very original or a good idea.

The last thing I will say is that some years ago, Robert De Niro came to Perth very briefly. As usually happens when people literally get off the airline steps, some journo put a microphone under his nose and asked, "What do you think about Perth?" Of course, most people are flummoxed by that, but his first impression was, "It looks like LA." We can see why he would get that impression from the freeways, the glaring sun and so forth, but as I said to someone when I read that comment, that is not necessarily complimentary, because let's face it: Robert De Niro chooses to live in New York!

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Minister for Tourism) [1.58 pm] — in reply: I would like to begin by thanking everyone for their contributions to the debate on the Major Events Bill 2023, and in particular the member for Landsdale for that final burst! I want to thank all members, because all took the opportunity to observe just how important it is that we continue to diversify our economy and that we make sure that tourism is an important part of that diversification process. I think every speaker recognised that Western Australia is an incredible place to visit, holiday, live, work or study. Everyone understood and acknowledged that Western Australia has a huge opportunity for the future by continuing to make sure that we drive visitation and have the opportunity to benefit from the

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economic activity that comes with that. Events are an important part of that tourism strategy of making sure that we continue to attract visitors to Western Australia.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

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