

TOURISM — DIRECT FLIGHTS

817. Ms E.J. KELSBIE to the Minister for Tourism:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's efforts to build a strong, sustainable tourism industry in Western Australia.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on this government's efforts to grow tourism to Western Australia, including by securing more direct flights?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house whether she is aware of any alternative positions on promoting Western Australia's tourism attractions?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for that question and, of course, she is a big supporter of tourism throughout the south west and the great southern. Creating further tourism opportunities and growing our tourism industry is a key goal of this government. I am following on from the excellent work of the former Minister for Tourism and the very bad work of the previous, previous Minister for Tourism, who unfortunately is not here to defend himself! When he was tourism minister, the borders were shut and he did not allow any tourists into the state. A key part of our tourism program is creating new direct links. Last week, we saw the recommencement of the direct link into Tokyo. We heard the announcement of the new Perth to Paris flight, on top of the Perth to Rome and Perth to London flights. We will also see the first direct flights into Vietnam, which will commence very soon in December. There is also the new links with Batik Air Malaysia through South-East Asia and also over into New Zealand. A lot of work has been happening.

Events are another key part of our tourism strategy. Today, the WWE tickets went on sale. I have not heard exactly how many have been sold but I think there were 50 000 pre-registrations from 80 countries around the world. I expect to get some feedback later this evening on how successful it was.

I know the Minister for Environment is going to be very keen on this; part of our strategy to support tourism is also making sure we support our nature-based attractions, whether it be enjoying our flora and fauna across the state. I know the Minister for Environment is particularly excited by those types of initiatives. That is why I am a bit surprised about the opposition's choice for the new opposition spokesperson for tourism, Hon Louise Kingston, the new Nationals WA member.

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I had a quick read of her inaugural speech. That is why I find her quite a surprising choice for the opposition spokesperson for tourism. Most recently, the south west was granted a very iconic award of being the fastest growing tourism area across the nation. The old-growth forests and parks and recreation are a key part of that. What does the opposition spokesperson for tourism think about forests? She thinks we should cut them down. There is also the incredible experience of whale watching in Albany. In Albany, we have the beautiful whale museum, which I know the member has a strong history with. Never would I have thought that the opposition spokesperson for tourism's key policy would be to turn the museum into an active whaling station again!

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I do not think that would be good for the tourism sector. Cutting down the trees and supporting whaling were the opposition spokesperson's policies for tourism. I am looking forward to seeing how she promotes those types of activities to the rest of the world. On our side, of course we support retaining our old-growth forests and making sure we are whale watching and not whale hunting. That is our approach to tourism in the state. Our approach has seen places throughout the south west and great southern thrive. We are seeing more and more tourists from around the world, around the nation and around Western Australia enjoying our backyard and our beautiful natural attractions.