

TOURISM — DIRECT FLIGHTS

43. Ms E.L. HAMILTON to the Minister for Tourism:

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

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house what this government's efforts to secure more direct flights and major events, such as the competitive world title boxing matches, means for WA?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house if she is aware of any other competitive matches taking place in WA?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for that question. Of course, the tourism industry is a vital part of our economy. Inheriting the portfolio from the Premier, it is clear to see that we need to continue to work to support our tourism industry. Inheriting the portfolio, we saw the recommencement of the reconnection of Western Australia to the rest of the world. We have 19 new direct flights, which are either reconnections or new flights. I was fortunate to go on the first direct flight to Japan, but also recently in mid-January, I boarded the first resumed China Eastern Airlines flight between Shanghai and Perth. China is a very, very important market for us. The reconnection is a seasonal service, but we are very keen to support that to be an all-year service. Of course, we will continue working to try to get direct flights into India. We have also secured direct flights with a number of destinations, including Bangkok and through Europe and the Middle East. Plus, there will be more flights into Perth, in particular from Emirates, which is moving from two flights a day to three flights a day.

As well as direct flights, we are also creating a number of opportunities for visitors to come from interstate and overseas for our incredible events. Our events calendar is filling up with some incredible events that really will bring in people from interstate and overseas. Of course, the world wrestling is on in a week's time.

Ms H.M. Beazley: Hear, hear!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I know the member for Victoria Park is a passionate wrestling follower. Also, we will have the boxing. We have an incredible triple world title boxing event on 12 May between George Kambosos Jr from Australia and Ukrainian Vasiliy Lomachenko. This is a major boxing event and there will be three fights that day. Of course, the headline fight will be the incredible fight between Lomachenko and Kambosos, but there is another fight. The "midwest melee" will be the lead-up fight to the major fight. We have seen this melee playing out through the *Midwest Times* in which the Leader of the National Party and the member for North West Central have gone head-to-head on the *Midwest Times* banner. As part of our boxing program, we have the member for Moore, Shane "the seat warmer" Love, versus the member for North West Central, Merome "the defector" Beard. It is going to be a cracker of a fight as we look to the other side to see the dysfunction and division that is the opposition.

We will continue to support economic growth, opportunities for tourism, more flights, more infrastructure and, of course, more events.