

TOURISM COMMISSION OFFICE, CLOSURE

355. Mr MURRAY to the Minister for Tourism:

The minister authorised the closure of the Western Australian Tourism Commission office today. Will he explain to the House why he did that?

Mr BROWN replied:

I thank the member for Collie for his question. As has already been indicated today by the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party in moving speeches to this House, devastation has been caused in the United States by terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, with a huge loss of life.

Members will be aware that American consuls and trade offices throughout the world have closed their offices today, due to concerns about other like attacks on their facilities. The Western Australian Tourism Commission, as members will be aware, shares a building with the United States consul's office in Perth which has been closed for today. In consultation with the acting chief executive officer of the Western Australian Tourism Commission this morning, a decision was made by the State Government to close the WATC office for the day. Although I consider any risk to that office and its staff to be quite minimal, in times such as this, when there has been a great shock to the civilised world, any risk, albeit very small, cannot be accepted. Therefore, the decision was made to close the office for the day. The acting chief executive officer of the Tourism Commission will meet with the appropriate authorities during the course of today, to discuss appropriate arrangements for the reopening of the office, a return to work by staff and the appropriate security. Obviously, the acting chief executive officer will be taking advice from the appropriate authorities in that regard. Many staff members who are not at the office today are engaged in activities with members of the industry and are working from home. However, the executive officers of the Western Australian Tourism Commission are on duty today and are working at the Perth Visitor Centre.