

TOURISM — ECONOMIC IMPACT — REGIONS

**717. Ms R.S. STEPHENS to the Minister for Tourism:**

I refer to the Cook Labor government's successful growth of the Western Australian tourism sector. Can the minister advise the house how this government's delivery of the new initiatives such as EverNow and the Drive the Dream campaign is delivering record levels of success in the WA tourism sector, and can the minister advise the house what this success means for jobs and businesses, particularly in regional Western Australia?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:**

I thank the member for Albany for that question. Of course, the growth in tourism and the tourism industry is a key part of our plan to diversify the state economy. It creates jobs and opportunities not only in the city, but predominantly in regional WA. Growing the tourism sector is a key priority to help create jobs and opportunities for young people, people around the state, and, of course, people living in our regional towns. A number of initiatives have been announced over the past couple of weeks. Importantly, we have also seen some statistics come through to show the strength of the tourism economy. In 2022, visitors to our state spent \$14 billion. That is a record amount, and very much points to the fact that tourism is back in WA and is growing rapidly. Over the past couple of weeks, we have announced and held a number of key events. I first point to EverNow, which completed on Monday evening. This event was created by the team behind the Perth Festival. It started under the stewardship of the former Minister for Tourism, the now Premier, and it proved to be very successful. Of course, the previous former Minister for Tourism —

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** One of the most successful in the history of WA!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** When the member for Mandurah was Minister for Tourism, we saw no visitors coming into the state. He was so bad, he actually locked the borders!

EverNow saw 70 000 people enjoy the *Fire Gardens*, and even more people enjoyed the spectacular *The Trees Speak* event in Kings Park. It was a celebration of Aboriginal culture, a celebration of WA, and next year it will get bigger and better. We saw the Western Australian public get right behind it.

Another key announcement is that world wrestling is coming to Perth, and I know that the member for Victoria Park is very excited. This premium live event is one of only 12 that will be happening next year and the only one that will be in Australia. It is a bit more sophisticated than the old Mario Milano, but it really is an incredible event that will see thousands of people travel from interstate and overseas and will be a major boost to our tourism industry.

Of course, another key announcement was that we have enlisted WA hero and very proud Western Australian Daniel Ricciardo in the Drive the Dream campaign. He is one of the best known Western Australians in the world and he is very much loved and respected throughout not only Australia, but also key markets such as Asia, the Middle East, Europe and America. These are very exciting times. We continue to work and make sure particularly our regional destinations continue to be a focus. I know that other ministers are promoting regional events and supporting activities across the state. As I said, this is all about creating jobs, new experiences and opportunities for Western Australians.