

NINGALOO REEF ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

919. Mr B.K. MASTERS to the Premier:

I refer the Premier to the taxpayer-funded television advertising campaign to publicise his political decision to reject the marina proposal for the Ningaloo Reef coast.

- (1) How does the Premier justify spending \$350 000 on blatant political spin to sell the false message that the reef has now been saved and deflect attention from the fact that the Government has failed to commit the proper funds to manage the area?
- (2) Given that the Department of Conservation and Land Management was unable to fulfil the promise to place two full-time rangers at Coral Bay during the peak tourist season of the past few weeks, does the Premier concede that this \$350 000 would have been better spent on positive management actions rather than a publicity exercise?
- (3) When will the Government take the action that is urgently needed to genuinely save the Ningaloo Reef from being loved to death and stop trying to fool the people of Western Australia into believing the falsehood that Ningaloo Reef has been saved?

Dr G.I. GALLOP replied:

- (1)-(3) We get some very interesting snippets of what a Western Australian Liberal Government would look like if one existed. The Minister for the Environment yesterday provided a good description of what would happen to our conservation-value forests in Western Australia should the Liberal Party be in power. She described what would happen to our old-growth forests and the flora and fauna zones in our forests within Western Australia. The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure gave us a snippet of the Liberal Party's position on rail. It did not produce one centimetre of rail during its eight years in government. We now have a snippet of the Liberal Party's position on Ningaloo Reef.

Ningaloo is the great icon of Western Australia. We are advertising for public submissions on our planning options document, which was prepared under the supervision of the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. The web site we created has received 349 461 hits and 15 080 visits. I am very pleased to say that a significant number of Western Australians have asked for the document so they can prepare a submission. Unlike the Opposition, the vast majority of Western Australians are proud of Ningaloo Reef and support the decision of my Government to ensure its proper protection. Therefore, they are very happy that we are consulting them about the future of that area. North of the Ningaloo coast is Exmouth and to the south is Carnarvon. We will develop a world-class approach to that area that meets the needs of the future. It will not be like the reactionary policies of the past, which are represented by the Liberal Opposition.

I remind the member of the real commitment we have shown to this area. We have allocated \$7 million for sewage treatment at Coral Bay, \$14 million for the Exmouth boat harbour, \$14 million for the Exmouth marina village, \$11 million for the Carnarvon Northwater residential precinct and \$4.3 million for the international passenger terminal at Learmonth. They are the commitments we have made to that area. That action should be compared with the ad hoc action and lack of commitment shown by the Liberals when they were in government.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Who built the passenger terminal at Learmonth?

Dr G.I. GALLOP: I say with great confidence that without the passion and commitment of Hon Tom Stephens, the money to build that airport would never have been available.

Several members interjected.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: That is the truth, and members know it.

Mr C.J. Barnett: You do not even know which Government built it.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: I know who built it. The money came from the work of Hon Tom Stephens.

Several members interjected.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: I say this to the Parliament and through the Parliament to the people of Western Australia: the commitment of Hon Tom Stephens to the regions of this State is beyond comparison. He has absolute commitment. No-one opposite has his passion, except the member for Warren-Blackwood. I put him in that class.

Several members interjected.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: Members should listen to this if they want the answer.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Dr G.I. GALLOP: The Government has more than doubled the number of full-time equivalent staff covering the Coral Bay region in its first 18 months in office, yet members opposite come into this Parliament raising an issue about CALM resources. One of the most disturbing features of Western Australian politics today - I emphasise this point - is the role the Liberal Party has played regarding Ningaloo. Members opposite have shown no respect for the proper processes of government. The questions opposition members have asked in Parliament about Ningaloo raise real issues about whose interests they bring into this place.

Point of Order

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I ask that the Premier table the document he just quoted from.

Dr G.I. Gallop: It's just an answer.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: You quoted from it.

The SPEAKER: The rule on the tabling of documents is that official documents need to be tabled. If they are notes, tabling is not required.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Tell the truth! They're not notes. It's a printed document.

Mr C.J. Barnett: They were not notes, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: As members from both sides of the House know, ministers have notes prepared and printed. The fact that they are printed does not mean they are official documents.

Questions without Notice Resumed