

TOURISM QUESTIONS TAKEN DURING BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Pages 23 and 24 of transcript.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Minister, in 1999, the then Premier, Bob Carr, and the then Minister for Tourism, Sandra Nori, promised to introduce a model of eco-certification for tourism in New South Wales. Can you explain or offer any reason why eco-certification has not yet occurred? Can you outline what you will be doing to expedite the introduction of this initiative to ensure a natural habitat protection?

Ms JODI McKAY: What I can tell you is that ecotourism is not the core business of Tourism New South Wales, but we are certainly supportive of initiatives that industry may come forward with.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: But the former Minister, Sandra Nori, believed that that fell within her portfolio area of responsibility because she was involved with the announcement. Can you take the question on notice and provide a full answer to the Committee?

Ms JODI McKAY: I can certainly take the question on notice, but I certainly cannot speak for the previous Minister for Tourism. I can take the question on notice and come back to the Committee in regard to what industry is doing and what Tourism New South Wales is doing in support of industry in regard to those initiatives.

Answer:

Tourism NSW supports industry driven accreditation programs. Tourism NSW's role is to promote and support destinations across NSW, it does not provide a regulatory function.

I am advised that a not-for-profit national body, Ecotourism Australia, manages an industry eco-certification program. I am further advised more than 40 NSW tourism businesses have been eco-certified by Ecotourism Australia. Tourism NSW continues to support the initiative of Ecotourism Australia to recruit NSW operators.

Page 24 of transcript.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Thank you. Some 10 years ago there was a report prepared entitled "Anxiety to Access". What has been done in the intervening period, or what are you aware has been done, by Labor Ministers for Tourism and the department to ensure that people with disabilities are able to access public events and festivals and ensure that the tourism industry meets the needs of people with disabilities?

Ms JODI McKAY: I am certainly not aware of that particular report that you are speaking about, but again I can take that on notice and come back to you.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Right. Are you aware of a report entitled "Flight closed—Report on the experiences of people with disabilities in domestic airline travel in Australia", which was prepared by the Public Interest Advocacy Centre?

Ms JODI McKAY: No, I am not aware of that report.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Can I ask you if you could outline what program initiatives you have taken, or that your department has taken, to bolster the capacity of people with disabilities to utilise tourism transport services?

Ms JODI McKAY: I can certainly undertake to come back to you. I think what it is important to note is that aviation and the management of that is the responsibility of the relevant airlines. I think what it is important to note is that there are also disability requirements. Perhaps that question would also be best directed to the relevant Minister.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: I can appreciate the need to address these questions to relevant Ministers, but they do seem to me to have a significant impact on tourism, and it is an aspect that you would do well to address yourself.

Ms JODI McKAY: I am certainly happy to take the question on notice and come back to the Committee.

Answer:

I am advised Tourism NSW is working in partnership with the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre on a pilot project to understand the need of travellers with a disability and how to provide information so visitors are aware of the accessibility of attractions and venues within Sydney.

The NSW Government is committed to improving accessibility options for people travelling throughout the state.

Pages 25 and 26 of transcript.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: I have some questions about the Casino to Murwillumbah rail line. Before members spring to your defence, I realise that it falls within the responsibility of the Department of Transport, but my questions relate to the closure of that line and its impact on tourism. Has the department every made any assessment of the impact on tourism to the North Coast as a result of the closure of that line?

Ms JODI McKAY: As I said earlier, I have been in this role for one month. Do we know if that has occurred?

Ms GREY: I am not aware of any analysis of that, although in the past we have cooperatively marketed with Countrylink to promote North Coast destinations. We continue to promote North Coast destinations through a range of programs and working with the airlines and car rental companies.

Ms JODI McKAY: If we have done any studies on that we can certainly provide them. We can take that on notice.

Answer:

I am advised that no studies have taken place on this issue.

The Hon Jodi McKay MP

TOURISM QUESTIONS ON NOTICE FOLLOWING BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Questions from Miss Gardiner

1. How much of the total Tourism budget is spent on marketing NSW?

I am advised the 2008-09 budget for Tourism NSW is \$43.633 million. Tourism NSW has allocated \$33.5 million to the marketing and promotion of Sydney and NSW. This includes industry investment in co-operative marketing activities.

2. How much is spent on regional tourism marketing?

I am advised Tourism NSW plans to directly spend \$10.7 million on marketing and promotional activities for regional NSW in 2008-09.

3. How much of the NSW Tourism marketing budget is spent on domestic tourism and how much on international tourism?

I am advised Tourism NSW plans to spend \$22.1 million on domestic marketing and promotional activities and \$11.4 million on international marketing and promotional activities in 2008-09.

4. In February 2008, John O'Neill's review into convention and exhibition space in Sydney was released. The report found a lack of convention and exhibition space was a major drag on the state's economy. This finding backed research commissioned by the Property Council and TTF Australia in 2007 which costed this loss at \$218 million per year, equivalent to the benefit of hosting a Rugby World Cup every year.

In responding to the O'Neill review strategy, can the Minister advise:

a. What are the timeframes and funding for the expansion of the Showground site at Homebush; and

b. What the timeframes and funding is for an expansion of the convention and exhibition centre in the Darling Harbour precinct?

This matter is not within the Tourism NSW portfolio responsibilities.

5. Hotels are important economic infrastructure needed and provide key tourism and business infrastructure. Without adequate room supply there is limited capacity to grow the tourism and business sector. New contemporary hotel stock is required if Sydney is to remain competitive as a destination.

In order to ensure sufficient hotel supply:

a. Is the NSW Government considering releasing Government-owned sites for hotel development? Industry understands from the Department of State and Regional

Development that they are currently in discussion with the Government about the future use of these sites.

b. Is this currently taking place?

c. If so, what is the status of this negotiation?

As part of the NSW Tourism Strategy matters of planning and infrastructure in tourism will be considered.

6. As regards more hotel development, is the Government currently in discussion with the City of Sydney on the issue of floor space ratio incentives for hotels? If so, what is the status of this discussion? If not, why not?

This matter is not within the Tourism NSW portfolio responsibilities.

The Hon Jodi McKay