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Acknowledgements
Paul King and Members of the Board of the Tourism Council of WA
Hon Ljiljana Ravlich - Shadow Minister for Tourism
Hon Ken Baston - Member for Mining and Pastoral Region
Liza Harvey - Member for Scarborough
Vince Catania - Member for the North West
Kate Lamont and Members of the Board of Tourism WA
Stephanie Buckland A/CEO of Tourism WA
Dean Massey - Aspen Parks

Ladies and Gentlemen
I, too, take this opportunity to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land we are gathered on this morning, and pay my respects to the Nyoongar people and their elders, past and present.

Given just a few more weeks, this breakfast would have marked the end of my second year in the tourism portfolio.

So it comes at a very good time for me to use this occasion - it is after all one of the biggest gatherings of the tourism industry in each year - to offer a few reflections on my time so far as your Minister and to talk about our approach for the future.

In September 2008, there was a fairly general feeling in the new government that it was already evident that something very serious was happening out there in the wider world.

That something, in the end, turned out to be the Global Financial Crisis, as we now all call it.

By the time that we had entered into our first Budget round, a number of things were clear.
The great bubble of the boom years was already bursting; I remember very well the dire warnings from the gnomes in Treasury that it had to be something very like an austerity budget: as little new spending as possible and savage restraint everywhere else.

Western Australia then, and for quite some time, was in an odd situation.

We still had just enough resources income to get by. But being a resources-based economy-heavily dependent on the continued health of the Chinese economy - meant that the Aussie dollar remained remarkably strong.

For tourism, this situation managed to deliver us some pretty awful outcomes; nearly the worst of all possible worlds.

The Global Financial Crisis in itself was bad enough.

Very large numbers of people simply put their travel plans on hold.

Larger numbers of potential tourists reacted by assuming positions of extreme caution.

That caution—inspired by factors such as the spectre of a ‘double-dip’ recession in the US - is still with us, and still affects some of our best tourism markets.

At the same time, the strong dollar had the devastating effect of making overseas travel cheaper for Australians, and dearer for our overseas visitors.

It was a time that most of us would rather forget, if we could.

But that’s difficult, because global uncertainty and the strong dollar are, to one extent or another, still with us.

It almost goes without saying that for the tourism industry, the GFC has significantly impacted on consumer discretionary spending

Consumers have less disposable income, and they are spending less on discretionary items like travel, and above all they are looking for value for money.

The latest Curtin Business School – CCI Survey of Consumer Confidence (June 2010) indicates that consumer confidence has fallen to levels previously seen during the height of the global economic slowdown.

Almost 40 per cent of respondents reported they are worse off because of the cost of higher interest rates.

Twenty-six per cent of respondents reported that their personal financial situation is worse than a year ago.

More than half of the respondents had cut back on spending to cope with the cost of higher interest rates.

Retail figures for May showed that retail sales have also slumped and consumers have stopped buying non-essential items.

Not only are consumer spending less, they are acutely focused on value for money.

Businesses right around the world, especially airlines, have responded by becoming even more competitive and prices of airline tickets have dropped.

And Australians have been particularly well placed to take advantage of this – with the strong dollar, low cost airlines and good employment outlook.
We all know the truth is that domestic tourism has been declining for the last ten years. But it is quite possible that the GFC has accelerated this trend.

According to the ABS, Australians made 6.8 million short-term trips overseas in 2009/10 – more than double the movements ten years ago.

Domestic visitor estimates for the year ending March 2010 showed a decline right across Australia, with the exception of Tasmania.

Over the last six years visitor spend in Western Australia has grown at (+) 9.9% above the rate of inflation, while visitor spend for the rest of Australia has not kept pace with inflation.

Western Australia has continued to grow international visitor numbers at better rates to the worldwide trend, averaging growth of (+) 2.9% per annum over the last 5 years.

In fact, WA has been outperforming Australia as a whole for international visitation, with Australian average growth of (+) 1.6% per annum over the last 5 years.

Western Australia’s international visitation growth for YE March 2010 was (+) 2.6%.

Of great concern nationally is the decline in Domestic tourism. Interstate travel and Australians travelling within their own states, has been in decline for the last decade.

Over last 5 years Australian domestic tourism declined an average of (-) 3.0% per annum.

WA has seen a larger drop, at an average of (-) 6.4% each year.

However in the last five years, the number of Western Australians travelling overseas has grown by an average (+) 21.1% per annum.

We have reached the highest number of outbound travellers ever from WA.

It needs to be emphasised that this is an issue for every State and Territory.

So, that we survived the last two years, and in relatively sound shape, is a considerable tribute to you in the industry.

As I have travelled around the State over the last 23 months meeting with people in the industry, I have been struck by the resilience of tourism operators across all sectors to withstand major shocks such as the GFC.

It is also a tribute to TWA and to the Board that they responded without delay to the GFC and acted to minimize the early impact on the industry.

The outcomes from this depended very considerably on the abilities of each operator in the tourism industry to respond appropriately.

Most, I am glad to say, survived, but I am very cognisant of the fact that for many of those, the struggle continues.

The ability of government to help, or to mitigate the worst effects, was severely limited by the thin resources available to us and factors, which are beyond our control such as the high dollar.

From the Government’s point of view a number of responses have emerged.

First, we did what we could to make sure that the industry had access to the best information possible - including information about likely future trends.
Our commissioning of the Carmody report was one good part of this response. The Government was on the front foot and WA was the first state to look at the potential impact the GFC might have on the industry.

The Government took on board Mr Carmody’s advice that there would be a major downturn in travel and we responded quickly by initiating the Holiday at Home marketing campaign.

The Holiday at Home campaign was developed to inspire Western Australians to support their State during tough times and take a break within WA.

As a result of the campaign, during the first half of 2009, the WA economy received an estimated $12 million boost and awareness and consideration of local holidays improved significantly.

Tourism Western Australia was the first State Tourism Organisation to partner with Tourism Australia on the No Leave No Life campaign, which ran in newspapers, online and outdoors in Perth, Sydney and Melbourne in May and June 2009, reaching an estimated 3 million consumers.

The results were encouraging and we have been continuing the partnership with Tourism Australia.

The latest campaign initiative includes a series of 30 minute programs to be shown on Channel 7 nationally, with one episode per State.

Albany featured in Series 1, which was shown in December 2009/January 2010 and Series 2 will go to air in December 2010/January 2011.

WA’s episode in Series 2 will focus on the Kimberley. The estimated advertising value of the 30 minutes national TV show is $750,000 and is expected to attract a national audience of around 1.3 million viewers.

We made sure that if we were able to squeeze a little extra out of the Budget, it was used for high-quality expenditure.

We have, for instance, been able to secure an exemption from the Government’s Media Marketing and Advertising cuts in each of the last two budgets.

On top of this I have corrected a structural defect created by the former Government whereby Tourism WA needed to seek boost marketing funding of around $5 million through the annual budget process for one of its core services.

Now, following the restructure of Tourism WA, the agency has $29-$30 million on an ongoing basis for marketing. This allows the agency to plan its marketing campaigns well ahead.

It is absolutely clear that in circumstances like those we have experienced with the GFC, business as usual simply won’t do.

While the Carmody Report allowed the government to react quickly with the Holiday at Home campaign to support the industry in the first half of 2009, it was evident that we had to re-look at the way we approach all aspects of the industry.

We need to build Western Australia’s competitive advantage and recognise this is a shared responsibility between Government and the industry.

With the foresight and support of the Tourism WA Board, the Government is re-shaping the way in which the Government supports the tourism industry.
Most importantly, we thought very deeply for some time about what we could do to lay a suitable foundation for the next generation of tourism in this State.

I say, ‘next generation’, for good reasons.

We have, I think been slow to recognise that tourism has grown up.

It no longer looks like what policy experts call an ‘infant industry’, one in need of constant intervention, help and guidance from government.

Tourism is now a mature industry and a significant, accepted part of this State’s economy, contributing a total of $7 Billion to the Gross State Product, and importantly $2 billion of this is generated in the regions.

It is diverse, entrepreneurial and responsive; perfectly capable of standing on its own two feet, whether we are talking about purely local ventures or the truly world-class operations.

The role of government in all this is increasingly clear.

First, the Government still has a very significant role in marketing this State’s tourism brand as a whole as a destination of choice.

And, second, the Government has a significant role in maintaining a good mix of flagship events and good local events.

And third, the Government has a major role in planning and facilitating infrastructure to support the tourism industry.

In this regard the role of Tourism WA is to work with other agencies – in particular planning, transport, environment, regional development and lands and development authorities like Landcorp and East Perth Redevelopment Authority as well as local governments and the private sector.

The examination of the agency and the needs of the industry by the Board of TWA in 2009, as you know, resulted in a major structural reform of Tourism WA – which many of the people in this room provided input to. Make no mistake, the structural reform of the agency was a response to the industry.

Tourism Western Australia Chairman Kate Lamont invited over 3,000 subscribers to Tourism WA’s regular industry e-newsletter Talking Tourism to provide comment on future opportunities for tourism in Western Australia.

We received more than 100 responses – some of which were from individuals and some of which were from groups.

You said that we had to fix a structural problem that had developed in the agency.

Clearly, Tourism WA had too many staff and not enough funding for one of its core service areas – marketing. Every dollar spent on salaries was a dollar missed on spending on marketing the State.

The reform has freed up $31 million over the next four years for marketing – money that would have otherwise been spent on staff salaries.

Since the end of May, Tourism WA has moved from 159 employees to 114 on the way to a target of 74.

You said that you wanted Tourism WA to focus on bringing new customers to the State.
You said that the Agency should stop participating in marginal activities, for example, advice on tourism development proposals and providing one-on-one consulting to small businesses.

So the Board and I have refocused the Agency on the three key drivers -- marketing, events and significant tourism infrastructure.

So let’s look at each one of these in turn.

**Marketing**

You said that Tourism WA should focus on marketing.

In February this year, the Premier and I launched a new brand positioning Experience Extraordinary Western Australia and Tourism WA implemented the Extraordinary Taxi Ride campaign.

I am not going to dwell on the successes of the Extraordinary Taxi Ride, but I do need to tell you that I was recently advised that the return on investment for this campaign was 13 to 1.

Every dollar spent on the campaign generated an estimated $13 in visitor spend – or a total of $72 million injected into the Western Australian economy.

Today I am pleased to announce that a new $7.8million domestic campaign will commence in October and run through June next year. This campaign includes $2.9million in industry contributions.

It will utilise the footage from the journey – showing the passengers ‘experiencing extraordinary’ in Western Australia.

The 2010/11 domestic marketing campaign with a total value of $7.8million will leverage content that was captured throughout the Extraordinary Taxi Ride including videos, photos and written content and will target the eastern states.

The campaign will feature the experiences and emotions of the passengers as they ‘experienced extraordinary’ in Western Australia.

Media will include cinema, press, online, PR and QANTAS in-flight advertising. The cinema and in-flight advertising have an audience potential of more than 5 million people.

From October 2010, a one minute commercial and a number of different five minute segments of extraordinary experiences from the extraordinary taxi ride will be run in a series of bursts within Perth, Sydney and Melbourne cinemas.

1,200 screens in Sydney and Melbourne will come alive with WA footage over the campaign period from October to June next year.

A major strength of this campaign is that because the majority of the extraordinary taxi ride was in the regions, the marketing campaign will naturally feature the extraordinary experiences to be had in regional Western Australia.

Key television programs will feature prominently in the marketing campaign in the coming months.

On Saturday October 23rd at 6.30pm Channel 7 Perth will air a one-hour special on the Extraordinary Taxi Ride featuring the extraordinary destinations and experiences in Western Australia.
This program will reach an estimated 149,000 Western Australians and the estimated advertising value of the program is over $100,000. Channel 7 is also considering the programme for national distribution, and we will pursue international distribution.

Tourism WA and the Regional Tourism Organisations will partner with Channel 9 to deliver the Postcards WA series in 2011.

Ten 30-minute episodes are planned to be broadcast from February 2011 and will cover destination content from across the entire State.

Tourism Australia’s No Leave No Life campaign includes a series of 30 minute programs to be shown on Channel 7 nationally.

There is one episode per jurisdiction.

Series 1 was shown in December 2009-January 2010 and Series 2 will be on air in December 2010-January 2011.

WA’s episode in Series 2 will focus on the Kimberley region and will be hosted by James Tobin from Channel 7’s Weekend Sunrise and Morning programs.

The estimated advertising value of the 30 minute national TV show is $750,000 and is expected to attract a national audience of around 1.3 million viewers.

Tourism WA is currently finalising details of new co-operative partnerships with a variety of key trade stakeholders from our major domestic markets (Perth, Sydney and Melbourne) to deliver an annual program of Western Australia travel packages.

This presents a new opportunity for Tourism WA to work with these partners to promote key events.

The Regional Tourism Organisations continue to be an integral component of our marketing strategy.

New five-year contracts to each RTO began on 1 July, which gives them funding certainty for this time.

The total funding for RTOs for the 2010-11 financial year is $3.15 million. This is shared equally between the five RTOs.

The RTOs will continue to undertake a variety of marketing activities in the domestic and international markets working with their members to deliver a broad range of product offerings as well as supporting Tourism WA at key trade events such as ATE.

The RTOs will also be leveraging the new state brand position Experience Extraordinary.

The 2010/11 domestic marketing campaign will be significantly enhanced by the new cooperative marketing agreement I recently announced with Bruce Buchanan, the CEO of Jetstar.

I am sure we all welcome Jetstar’s decision to expand existing key services to Perth from Sydney and Melbourne and add two new direct routes from the Gold Coast and Brisbane.

The new agreement will deliver an additional 40,000 new visitors to the State per year, spending an estimated $39 million a year over the next three years. I understand that forward bookings are tracking above expectation.

Tourism WA also has some exciting marketing plans for international markets.
And I am pleased to announce this morning that Tourism WA’s international marketing will be supported by another new airline agreement. Tourism WA and Singapore Airlines have established a three year cooperative marketing agreement.

The agreement will focus on attracting new visitors from Germany and Singapore and the developing market of China.

Let me now turn to the subject of events......

Events are a key part of our strategy for promoting Western Australia.

Events provide a strong call to action – giving people a tangible reason to visit now. They generate valuable media coverage that reaches prospective visitors from around the world, and they add vibrancy to Western Australia as a tourism destination.

You said that events are a key way to attract visitors to the State.

The Government has a clear two-part strategy for events – one is attracting major international events to WA and the second is developing WA home-grown events.

I am very pleased this morning to share some exciting news with you about Western Australian events.

Tourism WA has established a partnership with the Perth International Arts Festival to secure an exclusive production to launch the 2011 PIAF.

This production is a free, family-friendly event featuring the multi-award winning Pan.Optikum which specialises in theatre-music productions that combine spectacular events and themes from cultural touchstones.

The 40 strong ensemble cast thrill audiences with a mix of acrobatics, pyrotechnics, large-scale video effects, huge figures and live music.

The group has performed across Europe and appeared in Spain, Hungary, Mexico and Singapore and the world renowned Glastonbury festival in England.

The performance is exclusive to Perth and will not be performed anywhere else in Australia. It is estimated to attract 20,000 spectators to the Supreme Court Gardens in February to open this amazing international festival.

We anticipate that an event of this nature will help to position PIAF nationally and internationally as one of the world’s leading arts festivals.

In addition to that, Tourism WA will be establishing a new marketing partnership with PIAF to promote the event to new audiences on the East Coast of Australia and South East Asia.

This all goes to reinforce that Eventscorp is creating a calendar of events that is diverse and strikes a balance between cultural events and sporting events.

Eventscorp also works to establish, support and make sure that events are developed in our extraordinary regions.

A good example is the Ord Valley Muster which has developed over the last 10 years into a major regional event.

Tourism WA is working with the Ord Valley Muster and Mellen Events to significantly increase the impact of this iconic event by securing a high quality international artist to perform at the Kimberley Moon concert next year and establish other high quality events surrounding the Kimberley Moon to attract visitors and encourage a longer stay in the region.
A month ago Hyundai Hopman Cup announced a line up that will encourage visitation to the state.

I am pleased to announce today the Government has committed additional funding to this great Western Australian event.

The aim of this funding is to secure the Hopman Cup in Perth through 2014 via a new 4 year agreement between Tourism WA and the International Tennis Federation (ITF).

It will enable the tournament organisers to deliver the very best field ever assembled in Perth.

It will cement the tournament as the strongest event leading up to the Australian Open Grand Slam.

It will deliver increased visitation to the state and an enhanced television product via the new host broadcast agreement with One HD and Network 10.

And it will significantly upgrade the Hopman Cup prior to its transition to the state of the art Perth Arena in 2013.

EventsCorp has submitted a bid for the 2011 Australian Short Course Swimming Championships. This event would attract approximately 1,400 visitors and would cover 20 hours of national broadcast on ONE HD and therefore offering Perth an excellent branding opportunity.

As you all know, next year Perth will host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in October. Approximately 4,000 visitors are expected to attend.

Importantly, an expected 1,000 journalists will attend.

Tourism WA will be working with tourism operators to encourage pre- and post-CHOGM visits, especially to regional destinations.

CHOGM will be closely followed by the International Sailing Federation championships in December which is expected to attract 5,000 visitors who will descend on Fremantle over the 16 day period.

And, there is also the ISAF test event which will be held this year from 16 to 21 November. John Longley tells me he is expecting more than 200 competitors from 10 nations to participate.

These brand new developments sit alongside other recent announcements including the partnership with the Department of Sport and Recreation, V8 Supercars Australia and the West Australia Sporting Car Club to return the V8 Supercars Championship Series back to Perth for the next five years.

The V8 race provides WA with great destination branding opportunities through the event broadcast, which in turn helps market the State further and maximise visitation.

In 2010 we’ve also partnered with the Department of Culture and the Arts to secure two internationally renowned art exhibitions – A Day in Pompeii – on now at the WA Museum. This is a blockbuster event which is set to top the 100,000 visitor mark.

The first exhibition of the Great Collections of the World series which is Peggy Guggenheim: A Collection in Venice is due to open at the Art Gallery of Western Australia on 8 October.
And then there’s The Graduate. Thanks to an agreement secured by Tourism WA, the Australian premiere of this stage production again strengthens Perth profile as a city with a rich cultural offering.

Both the Guggenheim exhibition and The Graduate are exclusive to Perth and will not be seen elsewhere in Australia.

To summarise, Tourism WA is supporting 44 events in 2010/11, which will deliver millions of dollars in economic and media impact to the State.

It goes without question that another way of attracting visitors, and securing return visitation, is to offer quality infrastructure.

The commitment by the State Government to develop the Indian Ocean Drive to be opened shortly will improve access to the Mid West from Perth – is an example of Government providing infrastructure around which tourism industry can be built.

The Board of Tourism WA has identified a list of tourism infrastructure priorities in which Tourism WA is actively involved – projects identified as having the greatest potential to support and grow tourism investment and visitation.

These include:

Developing accommodation in the State’s protected areas to give visitors access to our extraordinary experiences.

Last October, I launched the Naturebank program in partnership with the Minister for the Environment.

The program involves identifying sites for visitor accommodation in national parks and undertaking due diligence to make the sites investor ready.

The first site is in Purnululu National Park in the Kimberley was released for Expressions of Interest (EOI) in December 2009 and the EOI process closed in March.

Today, Minister Faragher and I are pleased to announce that Intrepid Connections, a joint venture between Australian Pacific Touring and Intrepid Travel, has been chosen to develop the site.

The development of the site is a great example of how the Naturebank partnership between the Department of Environment and Conservation and Tourism Western Australia is working to develop nature-based tourism in regional areas.

As well as providing a boost to WA tourism, Naturebank provides opportunities for indigenous investment, employment and capacity building while offering eco-friendly, sustainable accommodation and nature-based tourism experiences.

The Rottnest Island hotel site tender assessment process is nearing completion with the preferred proponent expected to be announced very soon.

High on the Government’s agenda is the need to work towards further developing aviation access to WA, in particular, to the South West and the North West.

We need to have interstate, and ultimately international air access to the Margaret River Wine Region.

The Government (through Department of Transport) has provided funding to the Shire of Busselton for a technical study to determine the feasibility of upgrading the current Busselton airport.
That report has just been received by the Shire, and will be presented to the Tourism WA Board later this month (14 September).

Additionally, we need to establish Broome as a northern aviation gateway.

I have met with the owners of Broome International Airport and a number of international carriers to discuss the benefits of establishing direct international flights between Broome and Singapore, and they have agreed to work with Tourism WA to advance this important priority.

You said that we need to elevate the profile of tourism across Government.

And, we’ve made some very positive progress recently.

First, the Small Business Development Corporation has taken on small business support for tourism businesses including support for indigenous businesses. This is a plus for the industry because SBDC has a much broader reach than Tourism WA.

Tourism WA is transitioning the responsibility for small business assistance to the SBDC which has a network of 20 offices around the State. They have received staff and funding from Tourism WA’s transition budget.

In a second development the planning approval process for tourism developments is now fully managed by the Department of Planning which has streamlined the process to cut red tape. The Department has also issued a new draft Tourism Planning Bulletin – which incorporated feedback from Tourism Council of WA.

In another recent development Regional Development Commissions have agreed to take a greater role in tourism development, and in the South West, the Development Commission has taken on Tourism WA’s former regional manager.

Their primary responsibility is to support the development of regional economies across a range of industries.

It makes sense that tourism should be part of their economic development remit. We have provided that input as part of the review of RDCs being undertaken by the Minister for Regional Development.

Tourism WA has consulted with all RDCs to discuss how they will support the tourism industry. Already, the South West DC has employed the TWA’s former South West Regional Manager.

And let’s not forget about the support for tourism provided through the Royalties for Regions programme.

In the second round of Royalties for Regions funding announced in June, the State Government has committed $7.2 million on 50 tourism related projects across WA.

This is on top of the $5 million in the first round.

Projects include infrastructure upgrades, new tourist services, camping facilities, marketing and promotional activities.

These include projects such as the Bunbury Dolphin Discovery Centre redevelopment, an interpretive centre at Carnarvon’s One Mile Jetty and construction of a visitor centre at Derby.

There is no question that Regional WA is vital to tourism in the state.

Regional areas account for 54 per cent of all visitor nights.

Thirty-four per cent of 82,000 jobs generated by the industry are in regional areas.
As such our commitment to regions is clear.

Most of the state’s extraordinary experiences are located in regional areas, so our new brand positioning ‘Experience Extraordinary Western Australia’ puts the spotlight on regional areas.

The $31 million that is being freed up for marketing will directly benefit the regions – greater marketing of WA’s extraordinary experiences means more visitors to regional areas.

The renewed focus of Tourism WA on infrastructure has the potential to drive significant tourism growth that will assist the regions.

Many of the top development priorities in the State are in regional areas including eco-retreats in the Kimberley, along the Ningaloo Coast and in the South West.

So, let’s be certain about two things - the Government’s strategy for tourism is not business as usual and it is based on your feedback.

We will focus our involvement on the key drivers that will make a difference to industry by bringing new visitors to our State.

We will do this by delivering compelling marketing campaigns to position Western Australia as an extraordinary holiday destination such as the $5.35 million domestic campaign I announced today which starts in October.

We will do this by attracting high quality new events and by creating partnerships to help develop our WA-owned events such as the Perth International Arts Festival and the Ord Valley Muster.

We will do this by encouraging the development of significant tourism infrastructure, including accommodation in the State’s protected areas to give visitors access to our extraordinary experiences, and increasing aviation access to areas such as the South West and the North West.

And, importantly, as you have heard this morning we are doing this by taking a partnership approach, across government and with industry.

We’re already well on our way to achieving this through programs such as Naturebank and through relationships with other government departments such as the Small Business Development Corporation.

Finally, as Tourism Minister I will continue to listen to the industry, to provide you with updates and to take your feedback on board.

Tourism is indeed a mature industry, and one sign of this maturity is the mixture of relief and pleasure that has greeted our changes—‘about bloody time’ has been a fairly widespread comment as I have gone around the State.

And I repeat that we will not now or ever abdicate our clear responsibilities where they are vital to the good operation of the new tourism environment.

Only government can do some things.

Only government can, for instance, ensure that good planning processes can also be consultative and swift; that opening up our spectacular national parks to appropriate tourism developments can happen; that a whole-of-government approach can be put together when it is needed.

Only government can make the assessment that an event is worth subsidizing until it has had a chance to prove its worth.
Reform - and this is a major reform - is never easy. It helped, of course, that this particular reform had the full backing of the government.

And reform does not usually come easily to public servants; which makes Stephanie Buckland’s enthusiasm and competence in its implementation even more remarkable.

This reform would not, however, have been so well-conceived and so well-executed without the enormous energy of Kate Lamont and all the members of the board who have worked tirelessly over the last 18 months.

Governments rely to a surprising extent on the efforts of a considerable array of councils and committees and advisory boards over a whole range of portfolio issues.

In Tourism I think of myself as being lucky in the extreme to have a board of exceptional ability.

Under Kate’s leadership, with her clarity of vision and inexorable sense of mission and purpose, they have performed a very considerable service not only for tourism in particular but for the State as well.

And, finally, this new direction for tourism would not have happened without the comments from people in the tourism industry and without the conversations that have we have all had over the last two years.

The strategy I have outlined this morning and the announcements I have made, clearly have the stamp on them of what you, the industry, has told government that you want. I sincerely thank you for being here today and I look forward to more conversations with you in the future.

Thank you.