



AIT Tourism Course 5 July 2001

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): Recently I attended the year 2001 graduations for the Adelaide Institute of TAFE's AIT Tourism Course, where it was my privilege to hear some outstanding success stories. AIT Tourism is a classic example of how TAFE is an essential part of the state's economic development. At the graduation, I saw the coming together of graduate staff of AIT and the tourism industry. The key industry leaders praised the ability of the Adelaide institute's programs to provide leaders for tomorrow—a fact that has already been proven, with graduates filling many management positions across the industry. Industry leaders also spoke of how AIT Tourism works in partnership with it to help it do business. I believe that much of the excellent work that AIT Tourism, an Australian first, is doing in building a strong and progressive tourism industry work force in South Australia goes unnoticed, and I thank Mr Sandy McClure, the manager of Tourism and International Language, for helping me to gather these facts for the House.

AIT Tourism was the first general tourism training institution in Australia. It has built quite a reputation for very close tourism industry liaison and employment for students. AIT Tourism operates courses from certificate level through to the only accredited degree offered in South Australia, the Bachelor of Business (Tourism Management). The scope of courses offered is business based, with specialisation in retail travel, tour guiding, convention and events, tour operators and wholesalers and languages. Statistics have been kept from the first courses to show the number of graduates in fulltime work within the tourism industry within 12 months of completion of the course. AIT Tourism has maintained an 87 per cent rate for graduates in full-time employment in the tourism industry over the last 15 years. The remaining 13 per cent have gone on to further study or are working on a casual basis or working outside the tourism industry. AIT Tourism graduates now make up a large percentage of the young tourism professionals within the state and beyond. More than 30 per cent of the South Australian Tourism Commission are graduates of the program, and this is substantially higher, at 80 per cent, for the Adelaide Convention and Tourism Authority.

There would be few tourism businesses in South Australia that have not had contact with or employed a graduate from this exceptional institution. AIT Tourism has set up a past student network of graduates from the program. It holds a database of members and employment opportunities sent direct to AIT by employers. This has resulted in the placement of graduates in full-time positions at no cost to the graduate, except for a \$35 joining fee.

We are able to track graduates as they change positions through the same network. AIT is the state's largest training centre, with the tourism program taking an active role, along with Tourism Training SA, to gain employment for indigenous South Australians in a wide range of tourism professions. Contribution to the tourism industry of South Australia by AIT Tourism has included assistance in major conferences and events, staffing the Rundle Mall information booth, supporting new tourism businesses—for example, Malaysian Airlines Call Centre in the areas of employment and training—and research for a wide range of organisations, including Adelaide Airports Limited. If the total hours were calculated against a cost of, say, \$15 per hour, the contribution in money terms would be about \$320 000 a year.

AIT Tourism has negotiated a program of industry placement and graduate scholarships within the tourism industry to allow students to help develop a practical approach to their work. Rodney Twiss, of North Adelaide Heritage Apartments, stated that AIT Tourism graduates were able to be productive in the workplace within a few weeks compared with the usual period of three to six months for others whom he had employed. The graduate scholarship program provides fully paid work in a range of countries, including Australia, working in tourism businesses which market and sell Australian tourism products. It is clear that having South Australians in these positions creates a far greater flow to our international markets of information on the South Australian tourism product.

International activity complements the domestic program, resulting in South Australian students working with people from a wide range of countries and cultures. A graduate of Adelaide Institute of TAFE established one of the largest adventure tourism companies in Iceland. In 2000, AIT Tourism won a contract to train Oman tourism executives in tourism management, which did two things: first, it brought much needed funds into the institute; and, secondly, it provided ongoing business links with Oman.

Time expired.