



MINISTER FOR CULTURE AND THE ARTS; TOURISM

MEDIA STATEMENT

Attention: News Editor/Chief of Staff

3/9/07

'Australia' to put the Kimberley on the international tourism map.

The stage is set for Western Australia's Kimberley region to be showcased as a key international tourism destination, when Baz Luhrmann's film epic 'Australia' is released.

Culture and Arts and Tourism Minister Sheila McHale visited the set to experience the enormous scope of the film being shot at Carlton Hill, 100km west of Kununurra.

Ms McHale met filmmaking legend Baz Luhrmann to discuss possibilities for ongoing tourism benefits for WA when 'Australia' was released internationally.

"This is a significant cultural tourism initiative and we are very excited that Baz Luhrmann agreed to film part of his feature in WA," she said.

"'Australia' is one of the most anticipated movies in our recent cinema history and when it is released, the eyes of the world will be on us as a top tourism destination.

"We hope the movie will be a big drawcard for international tourists to the Kimberley region, similar to the impact 'Lord of the Rings' had on New Zealand tourism."

The Minister said the Carpenter Government had committed \$500,000 to secure filming in WA, with the financial return to the economy already reaching \$4million during shooting alone.

"The benefits to the region are enormous, apart from the excitement that comes with having Hollywood stars here, there are huge financial benefits to local business generated by a 400-strong cast and crew in town for several weeks," she said.

Ms McHale said shooting was due to finish on September 6, but the State Government was looking ahead to the longer-term benefits for WA.

"The release of 'Australia' provides enormous potential to trigger other international film productions to shoot here, which is great news for our screen industry," she said.

"There's also the added boost to the Kimberley's profile as a tourism destination of having international travel and entertainment media in Kununurra."

The film 'Australia' is a romantic action-adventure set in the country's northern outback before World War II. Find out more at <http://www.westernaustralia.com/australiathemovie>

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Statements available on the Government's regional website:

<http://www.regional.mediastatements.wa.gov.au>

Note: Vision and stills are available to media on request.