



Brittany Lauga MP B Urb Dev (Urb&Reg Plan)(Hons), C.Dec

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL AND ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

7 April 2022

Committee Secretary
Transport and Resources Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

By email - trc@parliament.qld.gov.au

RE: Submission into the Transport and Resources Committee Inquiry into the Economic and Regulatory Frameworks for Queensland's Island Resorts.

Thank you to the Transport and Resources Committee for undertaking its inquiry into the economic and regulatory frameworks for Queensland's island resorts.

I write to make a submission to the committee's inquiry as the State Member for Keppel. The electorate of Keppel includes two island resorts situated off the coast of Yeppoon: Pumpkin Island and Great Keppel Island.

Both Pumpkin Island and Great Keppel Island are ideally situated only 14 kilometres from Yeppoon which makes for only a short trip by ferry from the mainland.

Pumpkin Island is 6 hectares in area, whilst Great Keppel Island is a much larger, 1,308 hectares in area.

Pumpkin Island's resort, consisting of 7 self-catering cottages with a maximum of 34 guests, is a small, low-rise resort which runs on solar and wind power. Pumpkin Island Resort has won a number of awards, including

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the World Boutique Hotel Award for Australasia's most sustainable hotel in 2019.

The closure of the Great Keppel Island Resort in 2008 by lessee Tower Holdings was devastating for the entire Central Queensland community and economy.

Capricorn Enterprise (the region's peak business arm) estimates that over 200,000 visitor nights were lost which in turn hurt tourism operators on the Island as well as business and industry right across the region.

Whilst Pumpkin Island has an existing operating resort and is entirely on State land, leased to a single resort operator, Great Keppel Island has a large, closed resort on leased land, a number of accommodation providers and tourism operators situated over a mixture of land tenure including freehold, Indigenous freehold and leasehold land.

The land tenure of Islands is linked to the economic development opportunities and constraints of island resorts.

Similarly, access and services infrastructure determines an Island's economic development opportunities.

Neither Great Keppel or Pumpkin have a jetty or marina access which makes logistics (like loading and unloading goods and materials) and equitable access challenging.

Pumpkin Island's resort operates using wind and solar power systems and filtered rainwater for drinking water.

It is the first beyond carbon neutral island in Australia. There is a helicopter pad, two registered moorings and a 36-passenger boat for ferrying guests to and from the Island.



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The lease arrangements with the State Government and the sustainable tourism model on Pumpkin Island appear to be working well with the small resort thriving and adding to our region's tourism products.

On the other hand, Great Keppel Island desperately needs infrastructure improvements to facilitate better access by air and sea, potable water, sewage treatment and energy.

I was pleased that the Palaszczuk Government has committed a \$31 million investment in infrastructure on Great Keppel Island.

A Great Keppel Island Masterplan is currently being developed by the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Planning and Local Government.

Consultation with dozens of stakeholders has identified a number of priorities for the funds to be spent on, including a public access jetty, upgraded sewage treatment plant and improvements for day trippers including walking trails and visitor amenities.

Critical to the future of Great Keppel Island is a funding commitment by the Federal Government to improve public user infrastructure on the Island.

Unfortunately, despite calls for funds to be matched, the Federal Government has not contributed to the infrastructure needs of Great Keppel Island.

The Palaszczuk Government is doing all of the heavy lifting when it comes to delivering infrastructure improvements on Great Keppel Island which will help improve visitor experiences and economic development opportunities for the future.

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A collaborative approach to this opportunity is required - and the Federal Government needs to join us all on “Team Keppel”.

Thank you again for the opportunity to make a submission regarding these two very critical Islands in the Southern Great Barrier Reef and the economic and regulatory frameworks which surround them.

I take this opportunity to invite members of the Transport and Resources Committee to be my guests and visit the islands to gain a greater appreciation of their value.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lauga". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brittany Lauga MP Keppel

Assistant Minister for Education