



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Heritage Trails Network

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (9.39 a.m.), by leave: Queensland, as all honourable members know, is the jewel in Australia's tourism crown. We have got it all: sun, surf and sand on the coast, rugged landscapes in the interior, lush rainforests, matchless rolling plains, heritage towns, a wildlife like no other, and the greatest wonder of the world's coral reefs off our coast. With attractions like these, it is no accident that tourism is this State's second-largest industry, giving jobs to more than 125,000 people and contributing \$7 billion to our economy. Yet under the coalition Government, tourism was an industry in danger of becoming stagnant.

During the election campaign, I promised that my Government would revitalise it and one of our first acts was to provide the Queensland tourism industry with an extra \$5m to fund international and domestic marketing. Today I am pleased to tell this House that jobs and tourism throughout regional Queensland are to get a multimillion-dollar boost.

Yesterday, Cabinet approved more than \$40m in funding for the Queensland Heritage Trails Network over the next four years. This Centenary of Federation Project will generate \$100m in extra tourist-related spending in rural and regional areas and create around 2,400 jobs. The project is important not just for the injection of jobs and spending that it promises but also because it signals a coming of age for regional tourism in Queensland. So far the tourism potential of our regional and rural areas has not been fully realised. That will change when the four heritage trails planned for this network are operational. There will be something for every tourist—whether they are intrastate, interstate or international travellers.

There are four trails. The Coastal Trail will stretch through more than 2,200 kilometres of eastern coastline from Cooktown to Coolangatta showcasing heritage towns, local museums, indigenous craft centres and world-class natural areas. The Mining and Dinosaur Trail will connect the coast with the country from Miles to Mareeba, from Rockhampton to Normanton and from Townsville to Mount Isa. On this trail, tourists will find historical sites, mines, gem fields and fossil finds. The Matilda Trail will follow the Matilda Highway from the Queensland/New South Wales border to Burketown in the gulf, passing through land which speaks of Queensland's history. The Early Settlers Trail starts at Ipswich and covers the southern Darling Downs area around Toowoomba and joins the Matilda Trail at Charleville. In Ipswich, the old railways workshops will be refurbished as part of this trail.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: For the benefit of the honourable member, I am happy to outline the trails. These are the sort of actions that the Opposition will get under my Government. We can see the different trails.

A Government member: The Leader of the Opposition is a fossil.

Mr BEATTIE: Indeed, the Leader of the Opposition can be included in the fossil trail as an exhibit. I am happy to do that. For the information of all members, I table this. It confirms our commitment to regional and rural Queensland and I know that it should be supported by all honourable members.

As I said, the Heritage Trails Network is designed to crisscross the State highlighting areas of cultural and historical importance. Along the way the network will help to create jobs and boost the

economies of regional towns currently doing it hard. As well as the \$40m my Government is committing to the network over the next four years, the Commonwealth Government has allocated \$50m to the project.

Traditional holidays in Queensland's tourist strips of sun and surf will obviously continue to play a leading role in our State's tourism industry. The network, however, will enhance our reputation as a holiday destination with much to offer the visitor looking for something a little bit different. They will find it in Queensland in the Heritage Trails Network.
