



Speech by

**Hon. R. GIBBS**

**MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA**

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Hansard 18 August 1999

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Chinese Tourism Development**

**Hon. R. J. GIBBS** (Bundamba—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing) (9.47 a.m.), by leave: It gives me great pleasure to inform the House that this Friday I will be welcoming to Queensland the first official group of Chinese tourists to Australia. This is an historic moment for the Queensland tourism industry. In April, the People's Republic of China awarded Australia Approved Destination Status, which means Queensland can now market Sunshine State holiday packages directly to more than 1.2 billion middle-class Chinese.

This Friday, the first group of 27 ADS tourists from Shanghai will arrive at Brisbane Airport and tour Brisbane before visiting the Gold Coast for several days to sample local attractions like Dreamworld and Sea World. A second group of 47 ADS tourists will arrive from Beijing on Saturday and also visit the Gold Coast and Brisbane as part of their Australian holiday. These touring parties are just the historic first ripple of a Chinese tourism tidal wave set to hit Queensland and Australia. According to Australian Tourist Commission estimates, Queensland will receive at least half of all Chinese visitors to Australia by 2000. This equates to approximately 64,650 extra visitors. This is the dividend for all the hard work Queensland has done to promote our State as a tourism destination to the world's largest market.

During my recent ministerial visit to China, I negotiated a number of significant initiatives with Chinese tourism authorities to cement our new relationship. To further improve relationships, the State Government proposes to establish an exchange program for staff from Tourism Queensland and the Shanghai Municipal People's Government Tourism Administration Commission to work in each other's country. That will involve a number of young people coming from Shanghai to work in the office of Tourism Queensland. I was delighted when the Chairman of Tourism Queensland took that offer further and offered the resources on a further training program to have these young people employed for a certain period of time at theme parks, such as Movie World and Sea World, where they will gain an experience that is unknown in their country at this present time.

We also intend to improve our tourism presence in China by establishing a dedicated Tourism Queensland office within the Queensland Trade and Investment Office in Shanghai. This is a significant step forward. This is something we began negotiations on when we were last in Government. I am delighted that we have now been able to bring those negotiations to a fruitful conclusion. I am also hopeful that, following top level talks with senior Chinese Government officials in Beijing, the Premier of China, Jiang Zemin, may accept an invitation to visit Queensland during his forthcoming visit to Australia.

China represents a sleeping giant for Queensland in terms of tourism potential. Tourism Queensland established a presence in China early and is spending \$300,000 to promote the Sunshine State as an ideal tourism destination. This Friday's first official tour group from Shanghai is just the beginning.

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