



Speech by

Mrs J. GAMIN

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

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TOURISM LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mrs GAMIN (Burleigh—NPA) (3.17 p.m.): The Opposition supports the Tourism Legislation Amendment Bill 1999, because we agree that it simplifies the administration of the Act. The removal of the necessity for an annual regulatory impact statement for Indy is no big deal. This annual event has taken place at the same location for several years and there is extensive community consultation and involvement. There were no public submissions to the RIS process in 1998. However, this is not a blanket exemption and a fresh RIS will be required should the event ever relocate to another site.

The abolition of the Regional Tourism Ministerial Advisory Council is also no big deal. It rarely met and its role has diminished into insignificance. Changing the name of the QTTC to Tourism Queensland is no big deal, either. It is a cosmetic exercise as much as anything. However, I hope that, in reducing the number of members from 11 to nine, it will not turn into a big deal when we look at the proportion of membership. I hope the Minister is mindful that the Gold Coast is the premier tourism region of Queensland and Australia's premier tourist destination. It is important to our city—the leader of tourism in this State—that strong representation is maintained on such bodies as Tourism Queensland. I need to make this point, because I was disappointed to hear the Minister's attack on Gold Coast tourism in his statement to the House last week. In rejecting a request for funding for a new powerboat racing event, it was quite unreasonable for the Minister to attack the Robertson Consolidated Group on its organisation of the JAL marathon. This is Australia's premier long-distance race and is a proven international event. The Minister was a bit rough. It was not necessary and he was not fair. Terry Robertson is a promoter of important events and his efforts bring important tourism benefits to the Gold Coast and to Queensland.

I want to turn for a moment to the future of tourism and its operators. Tourism was introduced by the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies in 1997 and is now studied by some 3,000 students in 80 high schools throughout Queensland. From the year 2000, the program will offer students industry recognised qualifications in fields such as sales, office operations, attractions and theme parks. Leading hospitality firms are already preparing for exciting and dramatic changes in tourism and hospitality as these young graduates move out into the work force. There will be a new wave of enthusiastic younger leaders in the tourism industry and nowhere will this be more apparent than on the Gold Coast.

The Gold Coast is already the premier tourist destination in Australia. This position will be increasingly enhanced over the next 10 or 15 years as younger, better educated and innovative operators move in, find their feet and take over. It is a very exciting prospect. So I come back to the point I made earlier: it is vital that strong Gold Coast representation is maintained on bodies such as Tourism Queensland so that the very important tourist industry can be further promoted and assisted to grow to its full potential.

While we are on the subject of tourism, let me tell the House that our family-oriented tourist area of Burleigh Heads is being assisted as the annual pumping of sand on to Burleigh Beach is now in process. Our local beaches have been greatly damaged by weather conditions over the past months—the worst damage in some areas for 25 years and to the stage at which we lost so much sand off Burleigh that the 1974 rock walls were exposed. If we did not pump sand onto the beach every year, there is no doubt that the sea would be lapping at the bowls club on the other side of the highway.

This year there has been enormous scarring and scarping, the lifesaving tower hung by a whisker and the boardwalks south of the surf club were endangered. It is ironic that the lost sand has

settled just out to sea and will gradually drift ashore. But not enough of it will drift onto Burleigh Beach and certainly not soon enough. The littoral drift is north and some of the sand drifts at North Burleigh Beach will undoubtedly receive some benefit.

Every year the Gold Coast City Council pumps sand onto Burleigh Beach from the mouth of Tallebudgera Creek. This has the advantage of replenishing the beach and also keeping the creek mouth clear. In earlier years, permanent pipes were laid around the headland from the Gold Coast Highway side, but in more recent times pipes have been laid out to sea around the headland.

This year more than ever before we have needed the sand pumping and we have been waiting with decreasing patience for suitable weather conditions for the process to begin. Neumanns are the contractors. They finally got the dredge positioned in the creek and the pipes were laid. A chain is attached to the piping and a buoy indicates the position of the pipe. This year the chain broke, the buoy disappeared, the pipe got lost and metal detectors and divers had to be brought in to relocate the missing pipe.

As I said, pumping is now under way and Burleigh Beach will be greatly improved as a result—a very important improvement for tourism operators and businesses at this heavily patronised central Gold Coast tourist resort. Burleigh is only a very small cog in the tourism wheel of the greater Gold Coast area, but we need to make sure that strong Gold Coast representation is appointed and maintained to bodies such as Tourism Queensland for this leading tourism region within Queensland.
