



Speech by

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Hansard 24 August 1999

TOURISM LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—IND) (3.10 p.m.): In supporting the Tourism Legislation Amendment Bill, I wish to make a couple of points. Tourism Queensland, as it will be called, is a supporter of a group in our area called Gladstone Area Promotion and Development Limited, which has done a great deal of very successful work to promote our region for both tourism and development purposes. Some of that role will be subsumed by the new development board. However, I hope the support for that group will continue, because of the very fair-handed manner in which it approaches its promotion task.

Tourism is an important element for our region. It balances the industrial nature of our community. The emphasis on developing tourism for the Gladstone/Calliope region improves the quality of life of the people who live and work in that area. We have a lot of tourist attractions. The Gladstone/Calliope area is promoted almost exclusively as an industrial base. However, we have a strong tourism market that has growth potential. In the hinterland, particularly in the Kroombit Tops area, there are a lot of areas that tourists would enjoy visiting. That could be enhanced by the new proposal to raise the level of the Awoonga Dam. People in the Boyne Valley area who will be losing primary production income could replace it with income from tourism. One of the great proponents of tourism in the area, Mr Hector Davies, has written more longhand letters over the past 12 months than I have seen anyone write for a long time. He is dedicated, informed and articulate and would speak about tourism in the Boyne Valley for hours if allowed to. He sees great benefits—and with justification—if the relocation of the Boyne Valley road capitalises on tourism potential and is not put two or three ridges back from where the dam is to be constructed. He suggests that it be built on the bluff of the ridge overlooking the dam. I commend the proposals he has put forward. There is a lot of value in them.

Shane Mossman runs Boyne Valley Tours. He is a young man with a lot of vision. I commend his work. There is room for expansion in that business also. In addition, trips to the reef are available and are well known. Our beaches also attract tourists to our region. However, other facilities need to be looked at. Gladstone developed over a very short time frame. The meatworks died and QAL was established very quickly, resulting in an exponential increase in population. A lot of the older buildings were demolished. Nobody is blaming anybody for that. However, that means that only a small amount of heritage buildings remain. One of those pieces of heritage, Kullaroo House, has been developed by the Gladstone Port Authority. It is to be commended for the work it has done. There is now also potential for the old Gladstone Court House to be retained as a tourist attraction. The upper level houses the old and very nicely designed District Court. The bottom level could be developed for offices, particularly a legal precinct. There are proposals for the building. I know that the Government is looking at selling off the courthouse. That would be the least desirable option, not only because of its tourism potential and the retention of our cultural heritage but also in terms of the security of the new courthouse/police precinct.

The other issue that I wish to raise to do with tourism is one that is not within the portfolio of the Minister. However, this debate provides an opportunity to raise the concerns of the community. The PCYC, in conjunction with the Gladstone City Council, put forward a submission for a multiuser sports facility under the national funding scheme. That was refused. Disappointingly, one of the reasons given to me was that it was not a national facility. It was hoped that that would be achieved.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Clark): Order! The honourable member will conclude her remarks on this matter, because they are not relevant to this Bill.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: For tourism to occur we have to have people coming into the region. People would come into the region if they had a venue at which their sporting finals could be held and they would stay longer. One of the important factors with respect to tourism is getting people to stay for an extra day or two. That is what this sporting facility would have achieved. It was said that it could not be funded because it was not a national facility. However, it was going to be funded to become a national facility. The one common denominator for tourism in this region is that we are looking for a variety of venues to attract people to experience our region. This was one of the options that was available to get people to visit and then experience all of the other attractions.

The Bill has not generated any concern in my community at all. I believe that, provided Tourism Queensland is given an impartial political position so that it can act for the benefit of our community, Queensland will be the winner. I support the Bill.
