



Speech by

SHAUN NELSON

MEMBER FOR TABLELANDS

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TOURISM LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr NELSON (Tablelands—IND) (3.23 p.m.): I support the Bill before the House. However, in doing so, I suppose I have to disagree with the member for Burleigh on a few points. One of those is that I believe that one of the fastest growing and probably what will soon be the new premier destination for tourism in Queensland has to be Cairns, and the areas to the north and west of Cairns in particular.

Mr Schwarten interjected.

Mr NELSON: Of course, I do not want to detract from any part of Queensland. I think the whole State is wonderful. Considering that I live 2,000 kilometres away from Brisbane and the fact that Melbourne is actually closer to Brisbane than my home, the importance of regional input into tourism has to be stressed and has to be stressed at the highest levels.

My only concern in relation to this Bill is the abolition of the Regional Tourism Ministerial Advisory Council and the reasons given that it has not met or that it has not had much input. My belief is that we should actually be looking to find out why it has not met and what we can do to get more input or what we can do to actually maintain the strongest possible regional commitment to tourism.

I could speak for the full 20 minutes on the amazing projects going on in my electorate, but I will not do that. Instead, I will take up in another vein the subject on which the member for Gregory was speaking. The main matter that I would like to speak about today is the Savannahlander, the train that runs from Kuranda all the way through to Forsyth. The other day I was driving back from Chillagoe, which is in the west of my electorate, and I came across the rail motor parked at Almaden. I grew up calling it "cow town". There is not much in Almaden. I do not know if many members have been there.

Mr Schwarten interjected.

Mr NELSON: The member can say it his way; I will say it my way.

I was coming back and I saw the rail motor parked by the station. When I went down to talk to a few people gathered around, including the tourists who were there, the importance of the whole concept of tourism hit home to me, being a person who was brought up in an agricultural community. It is hard for farmers and people who were brought up working in an industry environment or working in primary industries to actually look at tourism as a stable sort of alternative to their primary production.

It certainly has been a breath of life for the community there. Not much happens out there any more and it was very good to see the people in the town getting around it and the people at the local pub being able to make a small living to supplement their meagre income in what was a community. I suppose that incident brought to my mind, because we are such a decentralised State, the incredible importance of tourism and the fact that we really have to concentrate on regional tourism.

Although I do not have problems with it in reality, my only concern—and I am sure the Minister will address this—is the abolition of the Regional Tourism Ministerial Advisory Council. How is it going to be replaced? How is the emphasis going to be placed on regional tourism? For example, this group did not meet, or met very rarely. Is there going to be a push to make sure that the people who replace it get together and make sure their advice gets to a ministerial level? As I said, I hope the Minister will address that point during his reply.