



Speech by

Hon. MERRI ROSE

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Tourism Industry

Hon. M. ROSE (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading) (10.04 a.m.), by leave: Queensland will host three of the most significant tourism forums in Australia during 2002. In a major coup and an Australian first, Tourism Queensland will host the National Conference on Tourism Futures over four days next April at Couran Cove Island Resort. The conference will bring together operators, policy makers, academics and tourism professionals to discuss the direction of the tourism industry. It is perfectly timed considering the hardships currently being experienced by the industry in the wake of the Ansett collapse and 11 September terrorist attacks in the United States. It is an exciting opportunity not just for Queensland but for the whole nation to discuss, debate and address the challenges our industry will face in the coming years.

Brisbane will also play host in May-June—for the second straight year—to the Australian Tourism Exchange. One of the world's largest tourism trade shows, it brings 2,000 Australian seller delegates from 650 companies face to face with 660 overseas tourism product buyers from 50 countries. In November, Cairns has won the right to host the official International Year of Ecotourism conference, which will bring up to 600 delegates to the city. Hosting this conference will showcase the Queensland ecotourism industry's cutting edge development, management and marketing initiatives to delegates from around the world.

There is no doubt that tourism is a fast-growing industry with endless potential and impressive figures showing that it is now worth more than \$60 billion to Australia and more than \$14 billion a year here in Queensland. The industry employs around 150,000 Queenslanders. However, we need to ensure that the continued growth of our industry is sustainable, and that is the focus of this very important conference. We recognise that sustainable tourism development is not just the job of the tourism industry. For this reason, the conference will bring together experts in many different fields, both academic and professional, to ensure a balanced and informed view. The conference will address issues such as destination development, competitive advantage, partnerships and alliances, and distribution.

The events of the last few months have shown that now more than ever our industry must be ready and willing to adapt and refocus on the ever-changing needs of the market, and this conference will help us chart the path to the future. We will be looking at how to maximise opportunities for, and minimise constraints to, growing the tourism industry in Australia. The conference will address all factors influencing tourism in this country including transport, roads, regional development, education, environment, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interests, immigration and economic issues. Conference delegates and speakers will address issues which form the framework of the Beattie government's groundbreaking Growing Tourism strategy. The Tourism Futures conference will be broad based and of tremendous benefit to the tourism industry.
