



Speech by

CHRIS CUMMINS

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Hansard 18 April 2002

TOURISM, RACING AND FAIR TRADING [MISCELLANEOUS] BILL

Mr CUMMINS (Kawana—ALP) (2.59 p.m.): It was Peter C. Friis who said, 'It is often the poor who are the most lucrative credit risk.' Somewhat sadly, I must agree. In speaking to this Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2002, I wish to touch on the repeal of the Hawkers Act 1984. This bill seeks to repeal the Hawkers Act, the Loan Fund Companies Act, the Invasion of Privacy Regulation and the credit reporting provisions of the Invasion of Privacy Act.

I, along with my constituents from Kawana and, indeed, from the Sunshine Coast, applaud the minister for her efforts to reduce the large number of acts governing the operation of businesses and business related activities in this state, and for her efforts to implement the recommendations of the national competition policy review of legislation within her portfolios. The national competition policy review of the Hawkers Act found that there were only a few licensed hawkers operating in Queensland and that no complaints had been received by the Office of Fair Trading over the last five years. The transitory nature of the way hawkers conduct their business means it is very easy for unlicensed hawkers to remain undetected. As a result, licensed hawkers may actually suffer a competitive disadvantage to their unlicensed competitors.

Under the Hawkers Act, hawkers may trade between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. These hours are inconsistent with the door-to-door provisions of the Fair Trading Act, which limit the activities of door-to-door traders to trading between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays, and which restricts trade on Sundays altogether. Upon repeal of the act, hawkers will be subject to the door-to-door trading provisions of the Fair Trading Act. I applaud the minister and her department for the proactive initiative of the 'No door-to-door traders' sticker, which is disseminated through state members' offices. It is popular—although not quite as popular as the 'No junk mail' sign for letter boxes. However, I have no doubt that the 'No door-to-door traders' sticker and sign will soon be picked up commercially and will probably be as popular as the 'No junk mail' sticker.

In speaking to this Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, I must also mention the record funding boosts to regional tourism under the present Minister for Tourism. The Beattie government's financial support for the state's 14 regional tourist organisations has been boosted by \$500,000 in the 2001-02 budget. The extra funds are part of a record base budget for Tourism Queensland and proves the government's commitment to the state's second largest industry—and a large job supplier for Sunshine Coast residents.

The Beattie government will provide Tourism Queensland with a core budget this financial year of \$39.4 million, the highest in its 20-year history. Each RTO received close to an additional \$36,000, increasing the government's support to them to \$5.1 million, including convention marketing funding, in the present financial year. The funding boost is in recognition of the magnificent work done by RTOs in promoting their regions. Two million dollars of the funding has been shared by Queensland's six convention bureaus at the Gold Coast, Brisbane, the Sunshine Coast, the Whitsundays, Townsville and Cairns. Tourism Queensland also received a \$1 million third instalment of the \$6 million three-year special-purpose grant quarantined for international and domestic marketing.

The 2001-02 budget of the Office of Fair Trading included the allocation of an additional \$581,000 for the Queensland Building Tribunal to enable resolution of domestic and commercial building and related disputes as quickly, economically and informally as possible. The Office of Fair

Trading has continued to protect consumers across Queensland from rip-off merchants and scam artists. The Office of Fair Trading is committed to improving marketplace integrity and building consumer and business confidence. A key role during this financial year is to build awareness of the consumer protection offered by this new legislation, as well as increasing business understanding of legislative requirements and responsibilities. The budget has allowed the OFT to develop further strategies to improve personal safety and reduce the number of injuries from unsafe products and services.

Over the last decade, the Sunshine Coast—and, indeed, Australia—has emerged as a significant and rapidly growing tourist destination. While its share of global arrivals is small, inbound tourism has grown substantially faster than the world average, a trend which we hope will continue. In net terms, domestic and international tourism contribute approximately \$6 billion to our Queensland economy. Tourism generates \$2.4 billion annually as an export earner, accounting for approximately 11 per cent of total Queensland exports overseas and second only to coal exports. The tourism industry directly employs nine per cent of employed Queenslanders. Tourism directly accounts for more than half of the employment in accommodation, cafes and restaurants, and for 21 per cent of the retailing industry, 19 per cent of the cultural and recreation industry, and 13 per cent of the transport and storage industry. It is estimated that, on average, one job is created or supported in Queensland for every 167 domestic visitors or 65 international visitors.

Tourism is a clean and green job provider. Recent forecasts for the next ten years suggest that international visits to Australia should increase on average by about 6.6 per cent annually, with 9.4 million visitors expected by the year 2010. Nationally, domestic visitor nights—the number of visitors multiplied by the number of nights they stay—are expected to increase by an average of 1.4 per cent per year to reach almost 339 million annually by the year 2010. The growth of visitor nights in Queensland should be slightly higher, with about a 1.9 per cent increase over this time to approach the 88 million domestic visitor nights by 2010.

International tourism, too, is on the increase. While international tourism represents a relatively small proportion of the Australian tourism market, it has been growing more rapidly and is a much larger potential market than purely domestic tourism. The number of international visitors to Australia grew significantly in the eighties due to major events, including the Bicentennial celebrations and World Expo, which was held here in Brisbane. Forecasts of international visits to Australia for the next ten years suggest continued long-term growth, despite the recent economic and terrorism related crises affecting international tourism world wide. The number of visitor arrivals to Australia this year is forecast to be 5.1 million. Queensland, as a preferred destination in Australia, is positioned to be one of the biggest beneficiaries of Australia's forecast international tourist growth.

In the year ended September 2001, Queensland received more than 16 million domestic overnight visitors, representing about 23 per cent of the Australian total. In addition, Queensland received over 26 million day visitors, about 18 per cent of the total for Australia. Domestic visitors currently represent about 89 per cent of total visitors to Queensland. Sixty-eight per cent of domestic tourists to Queensland are Queenslanders. New South Wales accounts for 20 per cent, with a further five per cent coming from Melbourne. Other locations make up the remaining seven per cent.

About 44 per cent of domestic travellers to Queensland come for a holiday, 32 per cent come to visit friends and relatives, and business travel is also significant at 19 per cent. The national breakdown for visit purpose of domestic visitors follows a similar pattern. Compared to international visitors, a far greater proportion of domestic tourists come here to visit relatives or for business purposes. As is the case for international tourists, a large proportion of domestic tourists travel to the Gold Coast, Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast, while a smaller proportion of domestic visitors make the journey to tropical north Queensland and represent a higher number than international visitors.

Ms Boyle: They have a very good time in the tropical north, too.

Mr CUMMINS: As long as they stop on the Sunshine Coast on the way up, I am happy for them to visit Cairns.

The Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Brisbane and tropical north Queensland have a combined share of 80 per cent of the state's total interstate visitor expenditure. Intrastate visitation was evenly distributed through Queensland regions, with Brisbane taking the largest share. The regional breakdown of domestic visitors for the year ended September 2001 for the Sunshine Coast was 2,308,000 total domestic visitors. The total for Queensland was some 16,429,000. These figures were taken from the Commonwealth government Bureau of Tourism Research.

Ecotourism is nature based tourism that involves education and interpretation of the natural environment and is managed to be ecologically sustainable. It encompasses tourism which occurs in the natural environment and adventure tourism, for example, sea kayaking and diving. Ecotourism is a growing industry on the Sunshine Coast and Queensland is a leading international ecotourism destination, with areas that are unique and known world wide.

Drive tourism, or the self-drive or motoring market, is one of the most important to Queensland tourism operators, and the Sunshine Coast is one of the leading destinations for the drive market in south-east Queensland. The Sunshine Coast is also the leading family destination. During the last financial year, 75 per cent of visitors to Queensland used a private vehicle or a hire car and there is strong potential in this market as it would be an attractive form of tourism for the very large number of baby boomers set to retire during the next 20 years. Considerable effort has been devoted to ensuring that Queensland's network of more than 65 accredited visitor information centres offering the display sign for visitor information—'i'—is operating at a high standard to support the demand.

I turn now to the backpacker industry, realising that this government has brought in legislation that will assist accommodation providers. The backpacker industry is a growing one, especially on the Sunshine Coast. Australia is increasingly popular with the backpacker market, with 423,000 international backpacker visitors to Australia and 279,800 backpackers to Queensland in 1999—about two-thirds of the national total. Backpackers to Queensland increased by 22 per cent to June 2000. The largest markets are from the United Kingdom or other European countries and the United States. However, Asian backpacker numbers continue to grow steadily. Although backpackers spend less daily than the average international visitor, they stay much longer and in total inject about four times more into the economy per visitor than other tourists. They are an important market, especially for the Sunshine Coast.

In conclusion, I will touch on a growing market that has seen conferences targeted on the Sunshine Coast. As a former director of the RTO Tourism Sunshine Coast, I was proud to be part of establishing the conference section of Tourism Sunshine Coast. Business tourism is a high-yielding market niche showing strong growth in Queensland. It is an important market to cultivate as conference delegates spend almost twice as much per day than the average visitor to Queensland. In Queensland, six convention bureaus—the Gold Coast, Brisbane, Sunshine Coast, Whitsundays, Townsville and tropical north Queensland—operate as part of a regional tourism organisation. While I was on the board of Tourism Sunshine Coast we were very happy to be involved with the RTO. The five convention bureaus were increased to six to facilitate the participation of the Sunshine Coast. Their focus is on marketing destinations to companies, professional conference organisers and incentives organisers to encourage them to hold events in the regions.

For the past four years, the Queensland government has provided \$2 million per year to the bureau for marketing activities, which has been matched by industry investment—a very encouraging sign on the Sunshine Coast. Business delegate days have grown on average by 16 per cent per annum over the three years. In the year ending June 2001 delegate expenditure totalled \$1.5 billion and it was estimated that growth led to an increase of about 5,500 jobs in Queensland.

Job creation through tourism is, as I have said, clean, green job creation. TSC should be commended for the work it has done in the past. I have a lot of confidence in the general manager, Andrew Sinclair, and the Chairman, Phil Harding, who run the internationally recognised Noosa Blue Resort on the Sunshine Coast. I commend the minister and her department for being very proactive in assisting the tourism industry, and I commend the bill to the House.
