



Speech by

JAN JARRATT

MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

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HEALTHY ISLAND RESORTS WEB SITE

Ms JARRATT (Whitsunday—ALP) (12.38 a.m.): It was my enormous pleasure earlier this month to host the Minister for Health, the Hon. Wendy Edmond, in my electorate for the launch of the Healthy Island Resorts web site. We all know—or should know—how fortunate we are in Queensland to have so many fabulous island resorts, most of which make a significant contribution to our attractiveness as a tourism destination and, indeed, our economy.

While it is fortunate that our island resorts attract people from across the world, and in many ways island life is idyllic, the truth is that there are risks inherent when groups of people gather together in a relatively small space in a tropical climate surrounded by the waters of the Coral Sea. Island resorts are particularly vulnerable to a range of potential public health risks such as food-borne illnesses, water contamination, marine stings, sun related damage and a high incidence of accident and injury, particularly in relation to water sports. Of course, there is always the danger inherent in exposure to natural disasters such as cyclones.

As the minister commented at the launch, it is exactly when people are on holidays and they relax and let their guard down that accidents are most likely to happen. However, if there is one thing that I know about our tourism industry it is that it is proactive when it comes to confronting adversity. It is no surprise to learn that the Healthy Island Resorts web site was developed by industry and government getting together to address the issues and develop an appropriate response. I congratulate the working group, which comprised representatives from Tourism Whitsunday, the Whitsunday Shire Council, Cannonvale Community Health and the Queensland Police Service, and was most ably facilitated by the Tropical Public Health Unit based in Mackay.

This working group decided that a web site was the most appropriate format for the compilation and presentation of the vast amount of information relevant to the issues pertaining to public health on resort islands. Not only is this format a more interesting and interactive way to explore the available information than traditional paper based formats; it also allows the content to be updated on a regular basis and to be available at the press of a button.

I have had an opportunity to go online and look at the web site, which is available at www.health.qld.gov.au/HealthyIslandResorts. The web site contains a truly remarkable collection of information on topics as diverse as child safety, treatment for marine stings, airconditioning, air quality, sexual health, food safety, first aid, communicable diseases, nutrition and sun safety. The site can be utilised in a number of ways. It would certainly be appropriately used as an induction tool for staff on island resorts, and resort managers and staff will also find the site useful when developing public health policies or looking for assistance in relation to compliance with legislative requirements and guidelines. The Healthy Island Resorts web site is a truly innovative addition to cyberspace. I congratulate all who had a hand in its development.