



Speech by

Hon. MARGARET KEECH

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

Hansard 27 April 2004

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Year of the International Tourist

Hon. M. M. KEECH (Albert—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development) (10.17 a.m.): Premier Peter Beattie has recently declared 2004 Queensland's Year of the International Tourist. The chief focus for Tourism Queensland for 2004 will be to increase international tourism to Queensland. We know that Queensland is already the best holiday and leisure destination in the world. This year we are making sure that international visitors have an opportunity to enjoy and experience our wonderful state.

With increased air access and the renewed popularity of Australia as an international destination, Queensland is set to reap rich rewards. We currently welcome more than 1.8 million international visitors each year—around 42 per cent of Australia's total. This is important for the sustainability of our tourism industry, because international tourism offers much greater long-term potential for Queensland than interstate or intrastate tourism. Tourism generates \$3.5 billion annually as an export earner. It also increases employment, with one job created in Queensland for every 65 international visitors. The industry employs more than 153,000 Queenslanders, many of them in regional Queensland.

During a recent visit to the Sunshine Coast, at the invitation of the member for Noosa, tourism chiefs told me that the industry creates 50 per cent of the region's jobs. By extending an invitation to United Kingdom, European, Asian and American markets to come visit us, we hope to increase our international tourist share.

Queensland's job will be made easier through a landmark agreement between the Australian Tourist Commission and other state and territory tourism organisations. Tourism Queensland played a key role in the evolution of the concept Tourism Australia (Europe), which took two years to develop and is based on extensive research and planning. The new partnership will reshape trade and marketing programs for Australia across Europe. More importantly, it will maximise the industry's marketing dollars.

In addition, recent aviation capacity increases highlight the continuing success of Queensland's commercial and tourism aviation plan. The Beattie government has attracted Virgin Blue to Queensland and Australian Airlines to establish its operations base in Cairns, with significant outcomes for regional centres. New services to Queensland include those from Qantas, Pacific Blue, Emirates Airlines, Australian Airlines and China Airlines. 2004 is already shaping up as a great year for Queensland tourism.