



Speech by

Hon. MARGARET KEECH

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT Tourism Futures Conference

Hon. M. M. KEECH (Albert—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development) (10.06 a.m.): Queensland is again proud to host the third annual national conference on tourism futures. This year the conference will be held in Townsville from August 4 to August 6. Organised by Tourism Queensland, the conference will bring together operators, industry representatives, policy makers, academics and researchers to guide the future of tourism in Australia.

This year's theme, 'Wealth Creating, Growth Sustaining', highlights the capacity of the tourism industry to create jobs throughout the regions and the importance of maintaining an economic, social and environmental focus to sustainability. This year's conference program will focus on the four broad subthemes of sustainable development, strategic partnerships and alliances, competitive advantage and marketing. Other issues on the program are trends and forecasts, aviation, risk management, protected areas, indigenous issues and inbound tourism.

Delegates will receive the latest information on industry performance, as well as a global perspective on future directions. I am glad to see that the conference will be outcomes focused. Issues presented and raised during the conference will be tracked and recorded to contribute to the production of a tourism futures communicate for distribution to government and industry nationwide.

The Beattie government recognises the importance of tourism to our state's economy. The government's commitment to the industry is unprecedented and it is unwavering. Tourism contributes \$6.3 billion to Queensland's economy and accounts for almost 6.5 per cent of our gross state product. It is our second largest export earner and employs almost 10 per cent of Queensland's work force, or just over 150,000 jobs.

The Tourism Forecasting Council predicts that more than 10 million international tourists per year will be visiting Australia by 2012. Domestic tourism is also expected to grow substantially over the next decade. Strategies must be in place to meet this future demand and to ensure that all of Queensland enjoys the benefits that tourism brings to our state.

The Tourism Futures Conference brings together sectors that have a direct role in tourism so that they can share their knowledge and contribute to resolutions on future directions. Last year's conference, held at the Sunshine Coast, drew 450 delegates and was a stunning success. I know that the 2004 conference in Townsville will be just as successful and just as productive.

The selection of Townsville as a conference venue puts the city on a national conference map, and I know all delegates will enjoy the delights of Townsville which were highlighted this week by the member for Mundingburra and will enjoy a very friendly welcome from the residents of Townsville. I extend my very best wishes to all delegates.