



Speech by

Hon. Margaret Keech

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Aviation Industry; Tourism

Hon. M.M. KEECH (Albert—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development) (10.16 a.m.): It seems that every month I stand in this House to report on more positive tourism statistics, news and results. Today, being Robert Schwarten's birthday, is another good day for the parliament. I am pleased to announce that Queensland airports are booming when it comes to tourism. Aviation reports out last month show a massive 33 per cent increase in domestic seat capacity for Queensland compared to September last year. In fact, this is an increase of 217,000 seats. Being a proud Gold Coaster, I welcome the results for the Gold Coast. From September last year our domestic capacity inbound has increased tremendously compared to this year. In just 12 months it has increased by 61 per cent to 140,000 seats. Queensland is the envy of the rest of Australia with results like these. But the Gold Coast is by no means unique.

Proserpine recorded an increase of 68 per cent, the Sunshine Coast is up 48 per cent and Hamilton Island is up 38 per cent. There have also been significant increases of well over 20 per cent for Cairns, Brisbane, Mackay, Rockhampton and Townsville. The debut of Jetstar has been great news for Queensland's regions. Virgin Blue has also increased services and capacity, and the tourism industry is truly the big winner. But the good news does not end there. On the international front, Queensland is again making gains. With the members for Whitsunday, Aspley and Yeerongpilly, last week I visited the Brisbane airport and was told by management that there has been an increase of 31 per cent in the international passenger arrivals in the past eight months of 2004. In fact, we were informed that, over the last 13 months, every single month has been a record for the Brisbane Airport Corporation.

For Cairns the news is good as well, up 22 per cent for the first eight months of the year. There is also good news at the Gold Coast airport. The annual international growth to 30 June 2004 was up 27 per cent and Pacific Blue and Freedom Air have recently announced new flights out of the Gold Coast. The Beattie government knows very well the value of a strong tourism industry. That is why we recognise that air access is absolutely critical for the success and growth of Queensland's tourism industry, which is our second largest export industry. Everywhere domestic tourists and international tourists are saying, 'Where else but Queensland.'