



Speech by

# Hon. Margaret Keech

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

Hansard Wednesday, 8 August 2007

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## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Queensland Tourism Industry, Climate Change

**Hon. MM KEECH** (Albert—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading, Wine Industry Development and Women) (10.06 am): The Howard government has been ignoring the impact of climate change on tourism for far too long and is now desperately playing catch-up. Further proof that the federal government is behind the eight ball on this vital issue emerged at last week's meeting of the Tourism Ministers Council in Canberra.

The federal government's announcement of a task force to develop an action plan addressing the impact of climate change on the tourism industry is welcome. I was pleased that my federal counterpart agreed with Labor state and territory ministers to fast-track these plans, but it is a shame it has taken so long for the Howard government to become interested in the impact of climate change on the tourism industry. Fortunately, the Beattie government has made the job for the federal government a little easier. This latest action plan will be well guided by the Queensland Tourism Strategy and the ClimateSmart Adaptation Plan.

While John Howard was still debating whether climate change even existed, we were already taking action to address its potential impact on Queensland's second largest export industry. The Tourism Ministers Council in Canberra last Friday recognised that Australia's credibility as a green destination had been severely tarnished by the federal government's refusal to sign the Kyoto agreement. The Beattie government acknowledged climate change and global warming as a key tourism issue back when the Queensland Tourism Strategy was still being developed. We knew then that coping with climate change was going to be a major challenge for the tourism industry. That is why a number of strategies within the QTS are designed to address this very important issue.

I welcome the Queensland tourism industry's partnership in working with our government in helping businesses run greener operations by developing an online best practice sustainable tourism package. We are also educating the industry through a series of regional climate change briefings. Most of all, the Beattie government is putting its money where its mouth is on climate change, investing \$414 million in a long-term strategy. The best thing the federal government could have done for our tourism industry and for our environment was to have shown genuine interest in addressing climate change and its issues, rather than being dragged into the debate now that it has become an election issue.