




Speech by

Jason Costigan

MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

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TOURISM AND EVENTS QUEENSLAND BILL

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (12.26 pm): I rise in the House in support of the Tourism and Events Queensland Bill 2012, noting the importance of tourism to our regional communities, especially that piece of paradise that I represent, the Whitsundays. This bill ensures that the traditional functions of Tourism Queensland and Events Queensland will still be carried out, except they will happen under the one banner. A new entity will be formed to help re-energise tourism in Queensland. Where the industry was once envied by other states, they have since gazumped us.

In the Whitsundays, the most tourism dependent region on the eastern seaboard, events are crucial to the tourism industry. On that note, I was absolutely delighted to announce recently funding again being provided by Events Queensland in support of next year's Airlie Beach race week. Race week brings in people from around the state, around the nation, around the world every year. It was terrific to be alongside the Premier and members of the cabinet when the community cabinet came to the Abel Point Marina, Airlie Beach, in my electorate in early August—before the start of this year's race week, which, I can report, was a raging success.

Dr Flegg: It was beautiful up there, too.

Mr COSTIGAN: It certainly was. I will take the interjection from the member for Moggill. My predecessor was the minister for tourism before the 24 March election. It was on her watch that Labor continued its sheer neglect of this once mighty industry. I have no doubt that, with tourism being put back on a pedestal as one of the four pillars of the state's economy under the Newman LNP government, this industry will see good times again. That was certainly the vibe I got when attending the Whitsunday tourism awards on Hamilton Island last month.

I have a vision for tourism in Queensland, in particular regional Queensland—a vision of bringing in unprecedented numbers of tourists from places like India, China and the gulf states, in keeping with our pre-election commitments. Further evidence of the Newman LNP government sticking to its commitment is the fact that the Premier, as honourable members would be aware, is now preparing to fly to India to head an important trade mission. I wish him well.

In the seventies and eighties tourism was one of the great growth industries in Queensland, from Cairns to Coolangatta. It was supported by the Bjelke-Petersen government. Yes, it was Joh and co. who helped make it happen. As a child I remember Hayles Cruises taking tourists out to the islands off Cairns and Townsville and our iconic Great Barrier Reef. In Mackay, my home town, it was the legend himself, the late Captain Tom McLean, the owner operator of Roylen Cruises, who took tourists from around the world and around the nation to Brampton Island and other islands throughout the Whitsundays as well as to the reef.

In Central Queensland locals will fondly recall the glory days of Great Keppel Island, off the Capricorn Coast. Mr Deputy Speaker, do you remember the 'get wrecked' slogan? I am sure the member

for Keppel remembers it. Today around CQ people want to see GKI redeveloped, but what does federal Labor and the federal minister for environment have to say? 'Get nicked'. That is what he says.

I also remember reading about an island that was once full of goats in the heart of my electorate until a certain bloke came along and gave us Hamilton Island, as we all know it today—that bloke being the late Keith Williams, a bloke whose legacy lives on thanks to the investment of people like Bob Oatley, whose commitment to tourism is underlined by his opening of the Robert Oatley College, churning out graduates in tourism and hospitality.

Mr Hart: And bottles of wine.

Mr COSTIGAN: And bottles of wine, indeed. I truly believe better days are coming for tourism in Queensland on the back of DestinationQ in Cairns in June this year and the government's aim of doubling overnight visitor expenditure to \$30 billion a year by 2020. It is wonderful to now see more international flights coming into Queensland, and I believe that regional airports, such as at Mackay and the Whitsunday Coast, could well be catering for international flights into the future, given the appeal of our 74 islands and, of course, the Great Barrier Reef.

In closing, I applaud the minister for what she is doing to get our industry back on track. It is the Newman LNP government that is providing the framework for a much awaited renaissance in the tourism sector in the great state of Queensland. It goes without saying that I commend the bill to the House.