



Speech By  
**Christopher Whiting**


**MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 September 2015

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL**

**Education, Tourism and Small business Committee, Report**

 **Mr WHITING** (Murrumba—ALP) (8.56 pm): Today I stand in support of the report tabled by the member for Townsville supporting the Appropriation Bill. It was wonderful to hear through the estimates process about some of the most innovative spending programs under the Palaszczuk government. There are two that I shall mention in particular, and one of these is the Attracting Aviation Investment Fund, which was set up to deliver airlines and airline routes to Queensland. What I did learn from the estimates process is that this originally came from a Labor initiative that was originally under the Queensland Investment Trust and then it morphed into the aviation attraction fund.

As we have heard, the Palaszczuk government has increased this commitment from \$8 million over three years to \$10 million over three years. We will use that to build tourism. It will be used to target our key markets and seize new tourism opportunities. It has already been used to grab opportunities such as the new Jetstar flight between Wuhan in China and the Gold Coast announced by Minister Jones and Premier Palaszczuk. We now have an agreement with Jetstar Airways and Hubei Wanda New Airline International Travel Services where from September Jetstar will operate two flights a week between Wuhan and the Gold Coast providing seats for up to 35,000 additional travellers a year. This has the potential to generate \$53 million in visitor expenditure to the local economy.

Another opportunity we have nailed down is that of SilkAir, which now flies three times a week between Singapore and Cairns. This is projected to deliver 20,000 visitors a year in a \$40 million economic boon to Cairns, and I know the member for Cairns will appreciate that. Another opportunity we have acted upon is from China Eastern which will run a seasonal service between Shanghai and Cairns to commence in October and operate during the Chinese New Year. The China Eastern and SilkAir secured routes will result in a net increase of approximately 47,000 international visitors a year, overnight expenditure of approximately \$90 million a year and support up to 270 new direct jobs.

These secured air routes and secured opportunities are a great start for the Attracting Aviation Investment Fund as it is operating under the Palaszczuk government. This fund is part of our plan to grow the tourism industry and tourism jobs—a \$23 billion industry that supports local economies and more than 200,000 jobs.

The latest Tourism Research Australia figures show that, in the year to March 2015, international visitors spent a record \$4.4 billion in Queensland. We aim to inject an extra 108,000 travellers into Queensland each year, which will increase the Queensland economy by \$64 million. To do that, we have delivered more than \$400 million in funding for Queensland tourism over the next four years.

The second issue that I shall mention is that of school maintenance. During the estimates hearing we learned that the Palaszczuk government will be investing \$763 million over four years in school maintenance. We are delivering a smarter, more cost-effective way of maintaining our 1,234 schools,

18,000 buildings and 32,000 classrooms. Minister Jones revealed that we have a holistic, long-term plan to deal with the maintenance that is needed over 10 years at a school. We will focus on delivering both maintenance and asset renewal to a number of schools bundled together. That bundling will deliver better value and more effective contracts.

**Mr Mander:** We've been doing that for two years, mate.

**Mr WHITING:** Yes, they have been doing it for two years. I thank the member for that interjection.

**Ms Jones** interjected.

**Mr WHITING:** Indeed. I will get to that in a moment. We had a lovely Queensland Auditor-General's report in March on exactly how well those guys opposite did. That report said that the money that the former government spent dealt only with the backlog up to 2011-12. What is embarrassing is that the Queensland Auditor-General's report said that the former government left a long-term problem. For \$300 million you did not—

**Mr Mander** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Furner): Order, member for Everton! Member for Murrumba, you have the call.

**Mr WHITING:** My point is that the two LNP programs—the Fixing our School program and the Advancing Our Schools Maintenance program—created a \$232 million maintenance backlog. That backlog is now worth \$260 million. They did not resolve the fundamental problem that contributed to the backlog in the first place. The former government's programs did nothing to resolve problems that will happen again. We need to combine that maintenance and look at that renewal to renew all of those facilities that we have in our school system.