




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Great Barrier Reef

 **Mr CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (12.18 pm): When one asks a mayor or a business operator, or even a member of the general public, where the gateway to the Great Barrier Reef is they are sure to respond with their local town or city's name: the Whitsundays, Townsville, Yeppoon, Mackay, Port Douglas—the list goes on. And, of course, Cairns is in that list. Everyone tries to claim the title of who truly is the gateway to the Great Barrier Reef, but the gateway to the Great Barrier Reef is Queensland. The gateway to the Great Barrier Reef is Queensland, Australia.

Recently I was delighted to see the Premier and the Minister for Tourism spend some time in Cairns to launch a new advertising package to the world that embraces the true beauty and abundance of what the Great Barrier Reef offers. With a group of local tourism operators, we watched the new 30-second TV commercial. It gave me goosebumps as the footage, the sound and the design of the advert are different. It is moving and inspiring. It shows something that we have not seen before in this type of advertising. The advertising push is different. It does not just say, 'Come and see the Great Barrier Reef'. It says, 'The Great Barrier Reef is to be cherished and protected'. It says, 'Come to Queensland'. It is being delivered in six or more different languages across the world in social media. If members have not already seen it, I suggest that they hop onto social media and find it.

The timing of advertising to the world could not come at a better time for my region and certainly for the state of Queensland. The Barron River electorate is built on tourism. It is an electorate with some of the highest tourism related employment in Queensland. There is no doubt that tourism drives Cairns and is a major economic focus for us all. One needs only look around the Cairns area to see bumper stickers on the back of cars saying things such as 'Tourism drives this car' or 'I like airline noise'. I am proud of the Palaszczuk government's response to the UNESCO decision, in the lead-up to the decision and in the work that has been undertaken, as well as afterwards. It is now that we must tell the world that our reef is alive; that our reef is majestic, colourful and abundant with wildlife; that we will work towards ensuring it continues to improve for future generations; that we will work to continue to improve the water quality; and that we will work to grow tourism all along the Queensland coast, because we want everyone to come and experience it.

I thank the Premier for taking this serious step and for taking this issue seriously. I thank her for leading this important issue from the front and for recognising the importance of the Great Barrier Reef, not only to my electorate but also to the electorates of many members who sit here today on both sides of the House as the Great Barrier Reef is something that we all share. It is the only natural wonder of the world that can be seen from outer space. I thank Minister Miles and the Deputy Premier for representing us at UNESCO and ensuring that the world saw that the Queensland government is a responsible government that can be trusted to care for the reef and promote recovery and

improvements in areas such as water quality. I thank Minister O'Rourke for recently hosting in Cairns a roundtable discussion with business and departmental leaders to discuss what we can do now to progress Cairns and our region and, in particular, for the decision to host a Far North Queensland economic summit in Cairns later this year. That will be a massive boost for business in the Cairns region. We know that with business confidence jobs follow, which is paramount in an area that has over 20 per cent youth unemployment, and this government has given an integral commitment to fix that.

It was concerning to hear the Premier speak of comments heard when visiting Singapore that some investors believed that the reef was dead. In Cairns, that alarmed us because that is not the message that we want out there. We want to send out the message that it is well and truly alive. We want people to come and see the reef and to invest in it. At the moment in Cairns there is a real buzz and an air of excitement among tourist operators and the general public. We feel as though we are on the verge of a new wave of tourism from the massive Chinese and Asian markets. Silk air flights from Singapore have already started, amongst other things. I am proud to stand here as part of the Palaszczuk government.