




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACKAY

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ADJOURNMENT

Mackay Electorate, Tourism

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (11.00 pm): I would like to share with the House an event that I had the pleasure to attend, the Mackay Tourism Awards. These awards celebrated the Mackay and Isaac region and were held in Clermont. The mayor, Councillor Ann Baker, emceed the awards, which were held on the local softball fields, which are nestled under majestic gum trees beside Wolfgang Creek. Mackay Tourism organised the event in a magnificent marquee. The emcee for the evening was the accomplished country and western singer Tania Kernaghan. Tania treated us to some music that she had composed. She is a very talented woman.

The awards showcased tourist operators who have demonstrated innovation, improved business planning, creativity and excellence. All of the entrants were worthy of winning an award. The awards highlighted the amazing range of accommodation available across the region, ranging from five-star luxury to budget motels, family caravan parks, cabins and camping grounds and, of course, people can still book into one of our country pubs.

The variety of tourist activities available in the combined regions is endless. I would like to share some of them with members. There is hang-gliding, diving with platypus, skydiving, cableskiing, charter fishing trips, visits to rainforests and the Great Barrier Reef, and visiting heritage centres and art galleries. So it is worthwhile visiting the regions.

The winners included the Sarina Sugar Shed. I urge members to call in and try some of their rum, sauces and chutneys. Mackay beach racing is a spectacular event in Mackay. All members should come to visit it. Once a year we have horseracing on the beach. There is also the Mackay Day spa; the Clermont Historical Centre; Mackay Transit Coaches; Rainforest Scuba, where people can get up close and personal to a platypus; 101 Things to Do in Mackay—and that is just the start of things to do; there are a lot more than 101 things to do; and the Mackay Blacks Beach Holiday Park. Tania Kernaghan was pleased to be able to present this award, because she shared with us that her brother, Lee, was conceived in one of Mackay's caravan parks while her parents were on tour. So she said that it is the place to go.

On a serious note, that night the tourism operators were really pleased and excited about the Palaszczuk Labor government's commitment of \$40 million over four years to the Tourism and Events budget to boost visitation events throughout Queensland. Our tourism operators need to have more people visiting them and they need to know that we are open for business. So please come and visit Mackay.