




Speech By
Brittany Lauga

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

Record of Proceedings, 10 November 2016

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Advancing Tourism in North Queensland

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (2.39 pm): I rise to give my strongest support to one of the fastest growing industries in Queensland, and certainly in my electorate of Keppel, and that is tourism. We know that creating jobs in the state's booming tourism industry is a key driver for economic growth. In fact, we know that tourism is a \$23 billion industry that supports 220,000 jobs and contributes to the economies of the towns and cities across Queensland, including those in the electorate of Keppel.

I am passionate about ensuring that the electorate of Keppel attracts more tourists, because I am acutely aware that tourism is good for my local economy as it grows local jobs. In last year alone in North Queensland, visitors spent \$4 billion, supporting jobs throughout the region. To the year ending March 2016, nearly two million domestic visitors, representing just under 10 per cent of all visitors to Queensland, experienced the southern Great Barrier Reef as their choice of destination. Also, in the 12 months to March 2016, international visitors to the southern Great Barrier Reef destination grew by three per cent—to 140,000 visitors—which is an increase of 4,000 international visitors. We know that tourism is the key to unlocking the north's full potential. That is why tourism is one of my priority areas in which to advance the economy of the electorate of Keppel.

We can also celebrate that, in the past year to June 2016, Queensland has seen record international and domestic visitation and expenditure. It is particularly worth noting the 31 per cent increase in the number of Chinese visitors to the state. The Palaszczuk government is putting North Queensland's iconic destinations centre stage in a new plan to boost tourism across the region. To win tourists, we know that we need more than just good destinations, beautiful beaches and great food and wine. We know that we also need world-class infrastructure and tourism product to meet the needs of a wide range of tourists—from backpacking, camping, glamping to five star.

North Queensland offers iconic cultural and natural destinations that draw visitors from all over the world. From the Great Barrier Reef, to an outback adventure, or a rainforest retreat, there is really something for everyone in my diverse region. The Advancing Tourism in North Queensland strategy aims to also build stronger relationships between North Queensland's cities and regions with emerging cities in Asia. This will help expand exponentially the number of visitors.

The Advancing Tourism in North Queensland strategy outlines actions to address the industry's key challenges, including improving water quality across the Great Barrier Reef, supporting cruise and maritime infrastructure, developing nature tourism and assisting Indigenous business capability. Confronting these challenges will position North Queensland to develop and deliver even greater infrastructure investment, creating more jobs for Queenslanders.

Recently, I met with the Consul General of China, Dr Zhao Yongchen, where we discussed trade and tourism and how we can encourage more Chinese tourists to visit the electorate of Keppel. We know that every dollar that visitors spend in the electorate of Keppel and in Queensland more broadly supports the creation of new jobs. The tourism industry is booming in Queensland. I want to ensure that the electorate of Keppel benefits.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to creating jobs in tourism in Queensland and in the electorate of Keppel. I am proud and pleased to support the direction of the Advancing Tourism in North Queensland strategy.