




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

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ADJOURNMENT

North Queensland, Tourism

 **Mr CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (10.04 pm): Tonight I rise to give the House an update on the tourism economy in Tropical North Queensland, in particular the electorate of Barron River. Tourism is again going from strength to strength in the Tropical North. For some time now there has been wide discussion about the upcoming tourism boom from Asia, and I can tell members that the door is open and we are well and truly inside that space now. We are seeing significant growth in passenger numbers at the Cairns Airport coming from our domestic market in addition to strong increases from China and Japan along with the North American market, Europe and the UK also doing well. Our major hotels are reporting increased occupancies along with increased day-touring products. One of the largest reef operators informs me that their domestic numbers are up 12 per cent and that this is from an already significant base. I am told that their Japanese numbers are up 16 per cent, their Chinese numbers are up 28 per cent and their German numbers are up 12 per cent. These results are being played out across the Tropical North, not to mention the huge benefits that come to those associated businesses in the region.

International passenger numbers have continued to grow strongly during April 2016 compared to last year. Our airport reports 13,360 more international passengers through the international terminal this April. This is a 33.7 per cent increase on last year. The Wet Tropics traditionally has a downturn between December and April during the off-season due to the rain, but this year that season did not eventuate and the tourists are still coming quite strong.

The renewed popularity of Cairns and Great Barrier Reef as a destination amongst the Japanese is continuing to rise, with almost 38 per cent growth in our Japanese passenger numbers for April. The total of 13,493 was the largest international market for the Cairns Airport, with many using the direct services between Cairns and Tokyo and Cairns and Osaka. Cathay's Hong Kong service and our Air Niugini and QantasLink services to Port Moresby have contributed to our international passenger numbers.

Domestic passenger numbers continued to grow during April compared to last year. We welcome the ongoing commitment by our domestic airline partners with an additional 5.4 per cent, or 68,000 seats, scheduled into Cairns for April, May and June this year, taking the total for this quarter alone to a reported estimated 1.3 million passengers. Thanks to the impact of our new international services that commenced between Cairns and Bali, Singapore, Hong Kong, Manila and Auckland and the continuation of the China Eastern seasonal service from Shanghai that operated through to the end of the month, I am very confident that, with a new airline attraction fund and trade delegations to China from our government, we can continue to grow these numbers for strong inbound tourists to Queensland, to Cairns and to further afield to explore Queensland. When we talk tourism in Queensland, we talk about jobs, we talk about job opportunities and the training opportunities, apprenticeships and the prospect of solid growth and economic stability.