



Speech By  
**Julieanne Gilbert**


**MEMBER FOR MACKAY**

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**ADJOURNMENT**

**Mackay Electorate, Tourism**

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (6.40 pm): Mackay and its surrounding region abounds with natural beauty—pristine rainforest to the north-west and its coastline long and golden. The area boasts the only blue water river in Queensland. It has national parks and fishing opportunities from the beaches and creeks. Cape Hillsborough has iconic kangaroos on the beach at sunrise and sunset. The list goes on. The Mackay area also has an opportunity to provide adventure tourism. The area has an Olympic-standard mountain bike track, with plans to develop more tracks, windsurfing, flying fox rides in the rainforest, hang-gliding off Eungella, parachuting, tiger moth flights, diving with platypus and barramundi fishing in dams. Recently, Mackay hosted the first Sheffield Shield cricket match to be held outside Brisbane. The Mackay region ticks all the boxes for being able to offer genuine and unique experiences to attract local and international tourists.

When it comes to emerging tourism opportunities, Mackay is the jewel in the crown of Queensland. Recently, Mackay hosted DestinationQ, where over 300 top tourism operators gathered to share ideas and workshop tourism opportunities across Queensland and to see for themselves the opportunities for tourism in the Mackay region. The Mackay region is developing its tourism industry and will be adding to the already 31,000 employment opportunities in tourism across the Tropical North, Mackay, Whitsunday, Townsville and Great Barrier Reef areas. The Mackay region needs to diversify from its traditional industries. The area has nature tourism resources waiting to be tapped.

My region is working towards being part of Queensland's growth in the Asian tourism market. Globally, the tourism sector is witnessing unprecedented growth in Asian outbound travel. Within four years, the number is expected to reach 286 million travellers—100 million more than there were in 2014. Asian travellers now represent nearly half of all international visitor nights in our state. With this level of growth expected to continue, Queensland could be hosting 1.5 million Asian tourists by 2025.

One of Mackay's leading restaurateurs, Adrian Connors, is a fine example of the tourism opportunities that exist for people in the Mackay area. His team at the Dispensary and Burp, Eat and Drink restaurants hosted a VIP dinner for key industry leaders, the Premier and ministers. On the menu was vodka pickled Hay Point prawns served with tartare and spicy semidried tomato aioli, Queensland line-caught coral trout topped with a mix of warm bruschetta and citrus and Clairview chilli lime crabs with soft leaf salad. This is what tourism in Mackay is all about. Adrian's dad, Graeme Connors, provided the background music for the dinner.