




Speech By
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ADJOURNMENT

Cairns, Tourism

 **Mr CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (10.46 pm): Cairns and the tropical north's booming Chinese tourism market is going from strength to strength with Hainan Airlines set to start direct flights to Cairns. This is the second large carrier to announce direct flights to Cairns from China in the last few months. Our booming Chinese visitor market is continuing to grow with Hainan's new twice-weekly direct flights between Shenzhen and Cairns, which is set to deliver \$64 million to the region's economy and attract an extra 30,000 Chinese tourists over the next two years.

The Hainan flights which are expected to start in December are the result of a deal signed last week between the state government and Hainan Airlines as part of the \$10 million Attracting Aviation Investment Fund. A few months ago Cairns was over the moon after hooking the year-round China Southern flights between Guangzhou and Cairns, starting in December as well, and injecting around \$30 million in overnight visitor expenditure in the region annually over the next three years.

The three China Southern flights per week will deliver 33,000 seats on an A330 aircraft. Hainan Airlines will fly twice a week over two years between Shenzhen and Cairns from December, and China Southern Airlines's three-year agreement for three flights a week from Guangzhou will further boost Cairns Airport's international arrivals, already up 9.2 per cent.

Tourism Tropical North Queensland, Tourism and Events Queensland, and Tourism Australia are to be congratulated for their work in this game-changer for Cairns. Cairns Airport chief executive Norris Carter said that the new direct route from Shenzhen would make it better and quicker for Chinese tourists to get to Cairns. He said that currently most international visitors to Cairns arrive and depart on domestic flights. With more direct international flights, it makes it faster and easier to get to Cairns, and we expect even more visitors. Cairns Airport has reported that over 80 per cent of Chinese visitors currently use a domestic flight to get to or from Cairns. The Hainan and China Southern services will give travellers the option of a shorter flight, no backtracking and more time to enjoy our destination.

Shenzhen is a major city in the Guangdong Province in China. It is one of the fourth largest and wealthiest cities of China. It forms part of the Pearl River Delta and has a population of some 11 million to 12 million people. The Pearl River Delta is the low-lying area surrounding the Pearl River estuary, where the river flows into the South China Sea. It is one of the most densely urbanised regions in the world and is an economic hub of China. It has a population of 120 million people. It is five times the population of Australia in an area half the size of Tasmania. Cairns is now directly plugged into this region with these two new airline services. Our city and region are ready. Tourism in Cairns is about to move into a whole new level that we have never seen before.