




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MOUNT COOT-THA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Ecotourism

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (10.08 am): Queensland is home to many of the world's best national parks. From the majestic Great Barrier Reef to the Wet Tropics and Cape York, the outback and the prehistoric Gondwana, tourists travel from around the world to experience our national parks and hope to catch a glimpse of our wonderful native wildlife.

Our tourism industry and the jobs it supports rely on our world-class parks for their livelihood, but we have to do more than protect these natural assets. We need to invest in them. When visitors come here, they expect—in fact, they demand—a world-class ecotourism experience. For three years the LNP talked a big game when it came to ecotourism but they delivered nothing. In just two years we have turned that around. Of all the ecotourism projects being delivered by this government in or near our national parks, the one I am most excited about is what is happening at Green Mountains campground. This project, in partnership with the O'Reilly's, who for generations have hosted visitors to Lamington National Park, will see one of Queensland's best camp sites transformed into an ecotourism drawcard. Guests will have a range of accommodation options, from traditional camping to powered sites and standing tents. There will even be hanging sky tents for a true treetops experience. They will be able to cook their meals in a communal cooking facility and share camp fire stories around a communal fire pit. This is a fantastic example of the government working with accredited ecotourism providers to expand the range of options available for visitors. That is just one of the ecotourism projects we have underway.

We have also developed Walkabout Creek in the tourism minister's own electorate, and every weekend that place is chock-full of families. We have invested \$10 million in Mon Repos. I know that the member for Burnett is very appreciative that Labor delivered those funds when his party would not. We are rebuilding the Dubuji Boardwalk in the Daintree. We are working with 'Skroo' and Jude Turner to deliver a multiday walk in the Scenic Rim. Stay tuned: there is so much more to come, because we know how important tourism is to the Queensland economy. We know it is our natural assets, our national parks, that draw tourists here from around the world, and we know that it is not good enough to just talk about ecotourism because that will not create jobs. You have to deliver new, exciting, world-class experiences, and that is what we are doing.