




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR JORDAN

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee, Report

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (6.22 pm): I rise to speak on the Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee's report on the 2018-19 budget estimates process. Our committee considered the expenditure of the portfolios of Innovation and Tourism Industry Development and the Commonwealth Games, as well as the portfolios of the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Science and the Arts. It is disappointing to hear those opposite disparage the importance of estimates and belittle the incredible amount of work that goes into the process, not only by the committees themselves but also by individual ministers, their hardworking staff and the dedicated departmental officers.

I note the member for Scenic Rim said that they were not given enough time. Frankly, that is more a reflection on what they did with the time allocated than the time itself. I certainly welcomed the opportunity to seek further information from the ministers in relation to funding programs and important policy work being undertaken by the Queensland government and the respective departments and statutory bodies, and found there was plenty of time.

The estimates report has clearly highlighted the importance that the Palaszczuk government places in the tourism industry in Queensland—an industry now worth more than \$25 billion and supporting more than 230,000 jobs. With a total of 21.8 million domestic visitors spending more than \$16 billion in the year to March 2018 and a record 2.7 million international visitors spending \$5.5 billion in Queensland, it is clear that the Palaszczuk government's strong commitment to funding Queensland tourism is paying off.

In fact, the largest ever boost to tourism funding in Queensland's history is providing the industry with the certainty it needs, with an additional \$180 million designed to leverage greater investment across the tourism industry, particularly in the private sector. This has included \$48 million for the Attracting Tourism Fund and \$46 million for the Regional Tourism Infrastructure and Experience Development Program, which also includes \$10 million for the Outback Tourism Infrastructure Fund, assisting communities to grow tourism by developing new and improved experiences or products—great news for regional Queensland.

Of course, we understand that one of the greatest attractions for tourism to Queensland is our natural environment—and its protection and enhancement continues to be a priority for our government. The Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef is leading the government's delivery of the Queensland Reef Water Quality Program with increased funding of \$13.8 million over four years including funding for our cane, grazing and banana industries in Great Barrier Reef catchments to improve water quality.

Our government is also investing \$35 million in capital works projects to enhance critical infrastructure including nature based tourism opportunities in national parks and other protected areas. I am particularly pleased to see how tourism and the environment can be brought together. It is the

Palaszczuk government that is delivering Queensland's very first ecotourism project in a national park in Queensland. As the tourism minister said in the House earlier today, the Wangetti Trail will be one of Australia's leading adventure based ecotourism experiences, providing walkers and mountain bike riders with a wilderness, bushland and ocean experience, showcasing the beauty of the Wet Tropics, national parks and the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage areas.

Having lived in Far North Queensland and knowing how beautiful this region is, I am so pleased that we are opening it up to the world through this ecotourism project. It is also wonderful to see that the traditional owners of the land on which the Wangetti Trail passes will have an active role in the project. This is a project being handled sensitively, cognisant of the important environmental considerations whilst also appreciative of the growing international interest in our beautiful national parks. I would like to acknowledge the work of both our tourism and environment ministers for this spectacular project.

In closing, I would like to thank the chair of our committee, the member for Stretton, my fellow committee members, and the committee secretariat staff, Kate McGuckin and Greg Thomson, for their continued support through the estimates process. Thank you also to the Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development and Minister for the Commonwealth Games, who certainly kept the committee and invited members on their toes, and the Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts for her considered replies. I commend the report.