



Speech By  
**Leanne Linard**

**MEMBER FOR NUDGE**

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**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Year of Outback Tourism**

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (2.33 pm): In December of last year the Premier declared 2019 the Year of Outback Tourism. The Premier said—

The best present the outback can get is rain. While we can't make it rain, we can fill those hotel rooms and camping grounds with tourists.

The announcement was supported by a \$10 million Outback Tourism Infrastructure Fund to attract new visitors to this magical part of Queensland. As tourism minister, Kate Jones, said—

Outback Queensland has something for everyone—from rich Indigenous cultural experiences to some of the world's rarest dinosaur bones and some of the most picturesque landscapes on the globe.

Tourism in outback Queensland is already worth more than \$350 million and supports 3,700 outback jobs. Our government is supporting these local communities to see numbers continue to grow and create sustainable jobs for people in the outback. Grants from \$1,000 up to \$100,000 were made available as part of the campaign to support regional events, festivals, art and cultural performances and installations promoting the outback. A revamped calendar of events in Western Queensland was released to coincide with the Year of the Outback and investment in new attractions which are so critical to diversifying the outback economy to sustain communities, particularly through volatile weather events like drought.

The latest National Visitor Survey data shows that this investment has delivered dividends, with local visitor expenditure at an all-time high. From June 2018 to June 2019, outback Queensland visitor nights spiked by over 23 per cent. There is nothing quite like an outback festival, muster, horse or camel race, but it is the land and its people that will always call you back to the bush. I was born in a regional city, spent five years in the Territory, and grew up spending time every year on the family farm. My two young boys were born in the city and are growing up on the bay, but I want them to similarly grow up with an appreciation of the vastness, beauty and at times harshness of our great state and country.

In the school holidays just past my husband and I took the opportunity to take our boys on the road to support the Year of Outback Tourism and our regional towns. Many hours were spent on the road travelling through Boulia; Barcaldine, to the Tree of Knowledge; Longreach, to the Qantas Museum and the Stockman's Hall of Fame; Winton, to the Outback Film Festival and Age of Dinosaurs Museum; Hughenden and Richmond, to complete the dinosaur trail; and even a quick overnight stop in Camooweal before starting the journey home.

There are far too many highlights to mention, but watching the sun start to set while stopped on the Landsborough Highway and seeing a quintessential Australian drover run cattle west to Winton has to be one of them. I take this opportunity to thank those regional towns we visited for their hospitality, for the invaluable memories and lessons they gave our two boys, and to encourage all Queenslanders to explore our beautiful Queensland outback.