



Speech By  
**Amanda Camm**


**MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY**

---

Record of Proceedings, 2 December 2020

## ADJOURNMENT

### Whitsunday Electorate, Tourism Industry

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (7.12 pm): The Whitsundays is the most tourism reliant region in Queensland, representing one in every three jobs. The Whitsunday tourism industry represents 40 per cent of the \$6.3 billion Great Barrier Reef market. I recognise the resilience of the Whitsunday Charter Boat Industry Association and I commit to being their strongest voice. They would welcome consultation regarding any further COVID-safe industry plans with both the department of tourism and Queensland Health. They are willing to proactively work with the relevant departments to see restrictions eased, with visitor safety at the forefront.

There are significant challenges that I draw the House's attention to. The current restrictions mean that the transfer of passengers via ferry between the islands and the mainland can operate at 100 per cent capacity, while the same vessel operating a tour to Whitehaven Beach or the Great Barrier Reef has to operate at a reduced capacity of 50 per cent. The overnight fleet is restricted in capacity, even though it undertakes pre-screening, collects contact-tracing data and operates the majority of its services in the open air. The combined losses of 20 surveyed members of WCBA due to COVID-19 impacts exceed \$1.1 million per week, which is currently unsustainable and has a significant flow-on effect to the local economy.

The borders are now opening, which is welcomed by the charter boat industry, but the industry is calling for engagement with the industry and a review of these restrictions as a matter of urgency. Many of these operators have had to redesign their product to meet Australian markets as they were solely reliant on the international market, and they now need an urgent review to take advantage of the holiday season before our cyclone season and the traditionally quiet wet season commences. I also express the industry's frustration about the eligibility criteria for the marine tourism rebate. ABN holders with one vessel measuring six metres receive the same amount of funding as ABN holders with six vessels measuring 12 metres.

We have policy on the run that lacks recognition that berthing fees differ and that they are privately owned in the Whitsunday marinas, unlike Cairns where they are government owned. The goodwill of the marina owners who are providing discounts has helped our operators stay afloat in the Whitsundays. I have written to the tourism minister and I am waiting for a response. I will continue to voice the challenges that are facing my local industry as a result of inconsistent government decisions and policy on the run. Operators need every opportunity to earn revenue to be able to pay berthing fees as these will be the berths that will ensure vessels are not washed up on our beaches during cyclone season, which would cause significant costs for the state government let alone environmental damage.