




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR GAVEN

Record of Proceedings, 18 February 2020

MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Coronavirus, Tourism Industry

 **Ms SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (2.53 pm): I start by acknowledging and thanking our hardworking Gold Coast HHS staff who have been working tirelessly to contain the coronavirus on the Gold Coast and ensure Queenslanders are kept safe and healthy. As the Assistant Minister for Tourism Industry Development and a born and bred Gold Coaster, it would be remiss of me not to use this opportunity to place on public record the challenges that our tourism sector is facing at the moment as a result of the virus.

On the Gold Coast last week I attended Sand Safari in Surfers Paradise and a women in tourism breakfast with our hardworking local candidate Kaylee Campradt at the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary and heard directly from the tourism operators who have seen a drop in their numbers as a result of the federal government's travel ban. This is also having an impact on our international education sector. I had the opportunity to speak briefly with Griffith University Vice Chancellor Carolyn Evans at the Gold Coast Suns women's first home game on the weekend. I should mention that they won their first home game—congratulations to all the players.

China is the Gold Coast's biggest source of international visitors. The concern many of us have had is that a reduction in these numbers may force traders in the tourism industry to reduce staff hours which we know will have a wider impact on the Gold Coast economy. The less money people have in their pockets, the less money they have to spend at our local businesses.

Last week the Palaszczuk government listened to the industry and announced a \$2.4 million package to Destination Gold Coast to safeguard tourism jobs in our community. That came off the back of a \$2 million marketing investment announced on the Gold Coast by the Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development and Kaylee Campradt. We acknowledge that there is still more to be done. That is why the Premier announced today a \$27 million package that assists small businesses and provides additional marketing money to the tune of an extra \$7 million for interstate and international tourism marketing and \$3 million for international education.

Queensland has still not seen any funding from the federal government. We are asking the Morrison government to join the Queensland government and support our small businesses and tourism and international student marketing campaigns as well as provide China with export support grants once our borders reopen. The federal government receives over 80 per cent of the taxation revenue in this country and yet it is the Queensland government that is once again doing the heavy lifting in response to this virus.

The member for Moncrief was happy to take credit for our booming tourism industry and events that this government has invested in in her first speech but is absent when people are in need of help. I will not accept those opposite holding our Queensland government to a higher standard than their federal LNP colleagues. If the Leader of the Opposition were genuinely concerned about tourism operators on the Gold Coast then she would pick up the phone to Scott Morrison and ask him to open the chequebook.

I will not hold my breath because at a time of unprecedented growth of the Asian middle class those opposite under the Newman government took their eye off tourism and conceded market share to southern states. They ripped \$188 million from the tourism budget. This severely limited TEQ's ability to plan for the long term. They had no funding certainty to enter into multiyear partnerships or to secure long-term marketing contracts and their short-sighted vision for tourism put thousands of Queensland jobs at risk. As a direct result of their policy, tourism growth flatlined.

In stark contrast, international and domestic overnight visitation and GRP have gone up under our government and we are continuing to invest in projects like a new world-class dive site with the city of the Gold Coast, an ecotourism Scenic Rim trail for long-range, six-day, five-night experiences with Spicers Retreat, a \$1.2 million partnership with the O'Reilly family to deliver a major redevelopment of Green Mountains Campground at Lamington National Park and more than \$1.4 million to partner with Binna Burra Lodge to build Australia's first permanent cliff-climbing course.

Our government has listened and we are acting. Today I am calling on the Prime Minister to urgently help the Gold Coast and the industry that supports one in seven jobs in our community.