




Speech By
Michael Healy

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

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MOTION

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Coronavirus Response

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (11.58 am): As a lot of people would be aware, tourism is absolutely fundamental to the Cairns economy. In my community, tourism supports one in five jobs and generates \$3 billion for the Far North economy annually. That means more than 25,000 jobs—that is, 25,000 people who rely on those jobs. The way some people here are allocating their three minutes is impressively disturbing.

We need everything possible to support and safeguard those jobs from the impacts of the coronavirus. What we have seen from this Palaszczuk Labor government has been immediate action. You have only to talk to the tourism operators in Far North Queensland to know that. That immediate action looks like this: \$7 million for statewide marketing campaigns; \$2.4 million directly into the coffers of Tourism Tropical North Queensland so that they can begin to work with Tourism and Events Queensland and Tourism Australia on existing campaigns in the marketplace; and \$3 million for the international education sector, which is a rapidly growing sector in our economy. It is important not only to recognise that sector but also to listen to them. They recognise how fundamental it is that the government has acknowledged what dire straits they are in.

Critically, there is a \$5 million fee relief package that will put money into the pockets of tourism operators in Cairns. We can only charge and make changes on the assets that we own. Far North Queensland tour operators have been doing it tough. They have been impacted by the floods, the fires and now the coronavirus. Today's announcement of the Palaszczuk government's coronavirus relief package of more than \$27 million is hugely recognised and I cannot be more proud to be part of a government that makes that contribution.

What have the federal government contributed? From Warren Entsch we have heard nothing. From Phillip Thompson in Herbert we have heard nothing. From George Christensen in Dawson we have heard nothing. The Prime Minister's comments last week were a slap in the face to the people of Cairns. When asked about possible funding for the tourism industry he said, 'No, there are no measures currently before us.' The federal government introduced the necessary regulations to not allow people from China to come into this country; we get that. For them not to be able to acknowledge that it is essential as it will have an impact on businesses, particularly tourism businesses, and then deny that the industry has come to them—we are talking about the Australian tourism—

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Order! Pause the clock. Member for Buderim, you have had a pretty good crack. Next time you will be warned under the standing orders for yelling across the chamber.

Mr HEALY: When the federal government makes changes, they must support it with a package. They have not done that. This Labor government has done that in Queensland. It is recognised by the industry. Today I am calling on the Prime Minister and the federal government to follow the leadership of our Premier and urgently deliver funding for Far North Queensland and our industry.