



Speech By  
**Michael Healy**


**MEMBER FOR CAIRNS**

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## MOTION

### Federal Budget

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (4.31 pm): If last night's federal budget was intended to be an election budget, it reached the wrong destination with the Queensland tourism operators. Tourism in its hour of need has once again been failed by Josh Frydenberg and the Prime Minister—and this is a man who once headed up Tourism Australia. You would think he would have some understanding of the challenges that are being faced by the industry at the moment.

If they thought last night's budget would be a vote winner in Queensland's tourism regions, then, as the Premier has already said today, they are the biggest losers. There was no additional support from the federal government's March aviation package, which fell flat with everybody—with the exception of the airlines—and we still have no clear time line or plan for reopening the international borders to overseas visitors. The message out of the budget is maybe next year or maybe not. There was absolutely no indication whatsoever—appalling.

Margie Osmond from the Tourism and Transport Forum has proposed an \$854 million JobKeeper style scheme for tourism businesses exposed to the lack of international tourists. That is particularly the case on the Gold Coast and in the Whitsundays and Cairns. A similar plan is already in place for some 8,000 international airline employees, but any hope of extending the program to the wider tourism community has been grounded by the federal budget. Tourism has been 'left high and dry', says Margie Osmond. She predicts that many tourism businesses will send up the white flag.

The lukewarm response to the budget from the tourism industry is summed up by Daniel Gschwind, who has told the ABC, 'It's hard to find the highlights.' He also used the term 'underwhelming'—that this budget has been completely underwhelming for Queensland tourism. He adds, 'The tourism industry has certainly been the first into the crisis,' and there is no doubt that it will be the last out of it. Those of us working and living in tourism regions are very aware of that.

Tom Tate, the Gold Coast Mayor, is a little disappointed also. He had been 'anticipating more support for the industry'. The Australian Tourism Industry Council's Simon Westaway also joins the chorus of total disappointment and said, 'The federal budget outlook indicates no foreseeable international market recovery for Australia's visitor economy, and this sadly spells further tourism business and job losses.'

This short-sighted budget fails to offer any immediate relief for the other big challenge facing tourism, and that is the skills shortage. Not once was that mentioned. These are real issues. The federal government is absolutely absent when it comes to any policy response. This is an industry which employs tens of thousands across our state and hundreds of thousands across our nation. Many of them are small businesses and they have been abandoned by the Morrison government.