



Speech By  
**Hon. Scott Stewart**


**MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE**

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Record of Proceedings, 10 March 2021

**MOTION**

**Tourism Industry, Support**

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (4.17 pm): I rise to support the motion to call on the Prime Minister to extend JobKeeper. Like many communities across Queensland, the removal of JobKeeper will have a huge impact on the people and businesses in Townsville. Throughout North Queensland there are numerous tourism operators who have relied on JobKeeper to keep their lights on, their doors open and the welcome mat out amidst this global pandemic.

There have been impacts on many operators such as those on Magnetic Island who have seen international tourism numbers certainly drop off the cliff. I have serious concerns about what will happen when the JobKeeper program is cut for those businesses. For the sake of so many businesses, the federal government needs to make sure that these businesses who are suffering have some support. I urge the federal member for Herbert to make sure that Townsville tourism and hospitality businesses are represented on this serious issue.

**Mr Harper:** He's done nothing.

**Mr STEWART:** I take that interjection. We have heard absolutely nothing from him nor the federal Treasurer, who was in Townsville just yesterday, who flew in for a photo-op and then refused to answer questions at his own press conference. We still do not know how or if the federal government plans to support tourism operators in Townsville and across North Queensland. Meanwhile the Palaszczuk government has been doing all the heavy lifting when it comes to supporting the Townsville economy. Just last year we released the Townsville Regional Recovery Action Plan—which I have right here, and I will table it because it is worth reading—to support our COVID-19 economic recovery initiatives.

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Government Unite & Recover publication titled 'Townsville Regional Economic Recovery' [294](#).

As part of that plan, we backed real projects with real jobs such as CopperString 2.0; Big Rocks Weir; stage 1 and now stage 2 of the Houghton pipeline project, because the federal government—

**Mr Harper:** Failed to deliver.

**Mr STEWART:** I take that interjection—the Drivelt facility, Port of Townsville upgrades, Riverway Drive, Queensland Country Bank Stadium and the Glencore smelter, saving more than 1,000 North Queensland jobs. That is the Palaszczuk government doing the heavy lifting. What do we hear from the federal government?

**Mr Harper:** Nothing!

**Mr STEWART:** Cue the crickets. Just off Townsville's coast we have the Museum of Underwater Art, which is a fantastic attraction the Palaszczuk government has invested \$4 million into. While this new attraction is important for the dive and drive tour businesses in Townsville, they are still missing international tourists. This means that jobs are certainly at risk, which is something that everyone should be concerned about. From the Treasurer's visit to Townsville yesterday we saw that they would rather duck and hide than provide any real answers about what will happen to JobKeeper when it finishes. The people of Townsville deserve better.