



Speech By  
**Stephen Bennett**


**MEMBER FOR BURNETT**

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Record of Proceedings, 25 March 2021

**MOTION**

**JobKeeper**

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (3.37 pm): In addressing the motion I wonder how much more as a House we could do to protect the great tourism industry in Queensland if we had used the time spent in the motion two weeks ago and in the motion today putting our efforts into real positive outcomes for Queensland. We all agree—and I have no doubt—that the federal government will give more targeted support. That has been the call. It has highlighted that we in this state need to do so much more ourselves. I highlight the issues around what we can do in construction.

I mentioned last night that we have to empower our local regional marketing people to do what they do best: remove the centralised nature of tourism marketing. Everyone should be encouraging everyone in their electorates to be the champions of what tourism can be, whether they are in the outback, Wide Bay, the north or the south-east corner. They are the sorts of things I would have thought we should have put our energies into in this place for a more positive outcome.

I question what these types of debates do for Queensland's investment and tourism sector. We cannot even agree what is right for the future of Queensland's tourism sector. Why are we not encouraging more investment in hero experiences? There has not been anything new built in this state for such a long time. I think we need to refresh our minds and attitudes and, more importantly, encourage those people with the capacity to put those tourism products to market so that we can all benefit from it.

One thing that has been dismissed is our call for half-price or free rail travel from the south-east corner into the Wide Bay area, whether that be Maryborough or Bundaberg, and further north. Why not give that experience to families that do not have the capacity to travel in cars? They can arrive with money in their pockets and have a great experience. We could revitalise the whole sector and see our local tourism industry start to flourish. Those experiences could be patronised by people who might not otherwise have the opportunity.

We were somewhat disappointed at how the targeted investment and the vouchers landed, but in this House we have the capacity to do a lot more to encourage tourism. We have to look at what we can do to make sure that our national parks and other wonderful natural assets are a part of the tourism experience. I call for this House to cease debating these motions that effectively achieve nothing. We could spend the same amount of time encouraging tourism and encouraging our great state to be where it needs to be.

Quite frankly, we are losing the State of Origin. We are fighting New South Wales and Victoria. We were slipping before COVID. We need to put our efforts into ensuring that we are the destination of choice. We need to make sure that when people do come here they get everything they expect and deserve. I reiterate: let's look at alternatives. Let's open the shutters and look at things such as free rail travel into the bush. Let's make sure that tourism in Queensland is something that we are all proud of, not something that we bicker over.