




Speech By
Stephen Bennett

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

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ADJOURNMENT

Tourism

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (7.06 pm): With so much going on in tourism in the nation and around Queensland it is an opportunity to turn a spotlight on the great operators, businesses and opportunities around the Burnett and Bundaberg region. A couple of months ago I had the great honour to team up with Team Bundaberg at the Australian Tourism Awards—and a shout-out to Bundaberg Rum Distilling, ecotourism on Lady Elliott Island and, of course, the Windmill Cafe. I give a shout-out to Joe and his team located across the road from my office—which is all very convenient. They also run the Beach Mill Coffee Bar. It was great to see Bundaberg Rum Distilling given an honorary hall of fame induction. They took out another gold medal at the tourism awards. It was a great night and I am glad that the tourism industry shone not only in Australia but also in Queensland.

On the southern Great Barrier Reef you will find Lady Elliott Island run by Peter Gash and his family since 2005, an ecowarrior doing all things good on the island. Let us not forget Brett Lakey and the Lady Musgrave Experience. These are brand new operations and tourism experiences that have come onto the market and we are very excited. One can go on the HQ pontoon and spend a night at Lady Musgrave. From Agnes Water and 1770 one can experience the reef and the lark tours as well. With all this going on let us not forget Mon Repos and the work that has been done there over the last half a decade.

Carly and Ashley Clark at Splitters Farm run a wonderful tourism operation. It has needed help along the way, but they have done an amazing job to make sure that it is everything that we would expect. Macadamias Australia, with an investment from the government, has put on a terrific new experience. With so many new tourism ventures we could not be more excited about the Burnett and Bundaberg electorates and what we have to offer.

I also give a shout-out to Katherine Reid, the CEO of Bundaberg Tourism. She is a tireless tourism warrior. I take this opportunity to put on record our thanks to Daniel Gschwind, the retiring CEO of the Queensland Tourism Industry Council. We have been to a few functions over the last couple of months in recognition of the valuable contribution he has made.

We are working in partnership with the member for Bundaberg to address the short-term accommodation issues in our region. We want to work together to make sure that tourism operators can benefit from more opportunities being brought to market. We are working with the council on a solution. We have to be mature and keep our focus on this issue. Short-term accommodation is something that the whole region will benefit from. There is vacant state land. The council has to have the will—I guess we all do—and we need operators to come along to make sure Bundaberg is the place of choice to put those beds. Peak demand periods are important for us. We are missing out on sporting and music events. It is time to make sure that not only tourism but everything that goes on in the region can be better supported. I make a call out to anyone who can help. It is time for us to put this accommodation issue to bed.