




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH

Record of Proceedings, 30 November 2023

TRANSPORT AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (3.56 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the report into the inquiry into the economic and regulatory frameworks for Queensland's island resorts. First, let me say that this was brought to our attention by many residents and people involved in either living on the islands or providing services to the islands. We worked for a while to get an inquiry up. There was a bit of pushback in the early days, but I have to commend the chair of the committee as he eventually negotiated with the minister so that we could get this report underway, and I think the report is a very fair and balanced report. There are a lot of recommendations in there, and I would recommend people to look at it.

This part of the world is amongst some of the most beautiful places you could see, but there are massive currents, there are difficulties with access, it is a tough place to live and it is difficult to get a tourism resort up. It all might look very good if you are looking on YouTube or if you are surfing the net, but, in reality, if the weather is bad and you are a resident on one of these islands and something goes wrong or there is a medical emergency, you can be in a lot of trouble. We heard that when we went to Keswick Island. A couple of people have spoken about the ferry we took over—the *Wildcat*; it is a bit of a bumpy ride. It was a pretty good day, but it was a bit bumpy. I certainly would not want to be doing that to do my grocery shop once a fortnight as some of those residents do. The current that was dragging through between the two islands and the fact that the pontoon had been damaged and was pulled up and there was no way to get there apart from on the tender along with everything else, it is hopeless. In a medical emergency or if something goes wrong with somebody on those islands, they are in serious trouble. It is good that the recommendations are there to deal with some of these issues.

The regulatory framework that the developers are operating under is very complex. There are multiple layers of government—local, state and federal—because of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. We should certainly try to find ways through that so that we can encourage tourism in a sustainable and environmentally-friendly, cautious way. People who choose to live on these islands should have the ability to do that and not be excluded from the normal things that a Queensland citizen would expect to be available.