




Speech By
Amanda Camm

MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

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MOTION

Far North Queensland, Infrastructure

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (5.39 pm): In 1982, Kuranda Riverboat Tours was established. It is a well-recognised operation that for several years won the Best of Queensland Experience award and it won the award again in 2024. Melissa and Warren Clinton are small business owners who purchased the business in 2015. We all understand what a tropical cyclone does, particularly those of us who live in Far North Queensland as well as others across the state who have to deal with natural disasters. We understand the devastation of floodwaters. What we do not understand is why the sitting member for Cairns, who also wears the hat of tourism minister, cannot intervene to ensure that tourism operators in Far North Queensland who rely upon revenue and visitation for business cannot get assistance fast-tracked by the relevant department. I am referring to a grant that was approved for this wonderful couple. I have actually spoken with them and they said that they have received only 30 per cent of the total grant. Two weeks ago, they were told they would receive 30 per cent of the grant—\$11,000. They are down in revenue \$1,000 a day and have not been able to operate their business for six months. Why has the Minister for Tourism and member for Cairns not picked up the phone and asked his department to fast track a cheque of \$11,000? It is disgraceful. It is an example of this government's failures. It is an example of Far North Queensland members failing small and family businesses and the tourism industry.

I have another example. This afternoon I had the great privilege of speaking to Elliot from Cairns go-karts. Our local candidate, Bree James, is on the ground and has been doing the job of the local members, who are full of excuses. I note that the member for Barron River is a former shadow cabinet minister.

Mr Crawford: I was a cabinet minister.

Ms CAMM: I am sorry: a cabinet minister. I correct the record. It never ceases to amaze me the number of government ministers who cannot get decisions made in their own patch, let alone in the interests of their own portfolios. Elliot from Cairns told me that he had to fork out \$10,000 up-front and then had to show \$40,000 worth of receipts to claim a \$50,000 grant and still has not received any feedback from the department. He has had to go into \$250,000 of debt to replace his go-karts, which will not arrive until November. The height of the tourism boom is right now in Cairns, but he cannot even draw on revenue for new infrastructure. It is a failing of this government.

We have heard from my colleagues about the Barron River bridge. Those opposite say they stand up for frontline workers. Every day that they fail to fix that bridge affects the ambos who are trying to get patients to care, the police who are trying to protect the community and the small businesses that are losing money and being held back because of the extra daily travel.

Mark Olsen from TTNQ has been working alongside businesses in Far North Queensland. Today we heard from the tourism minister about his record in tourism. While we will be looking back on the past 10 years, I need only look back on the past six months to see his failings in tourism investment and infrastructure in this state. I point to the Wangetti Trail. It has been almost 10 years and the first stage has not even been completed. What an absolute disaster.

I represent one of the largest tourism areas in this state and I can tell the House that the people I represent cannot wait for October. They are tired of this failed Labor government that cannot get one infrastructure project off the ground. Businesses are roadblocked by the department of environment. The department of tourism has no vision. No minister, current or prior, has delivered for small business operators and tourism investors in this state. The people of Cairns and Far North Queensland want a member for Cook, a member for Barron River and a member for Cairns and they will look to David Kempton, Bree James and Yolonde Entsch to show Labor the door in 2024, and tourism will be a great industry once again.

(Time expired)