




Speech By
Hon. Craig Crawford

MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

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ADJOURNMENT

Double Island

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (6.41 pm): I can assure the member for Burleigh that I have not given up this seat of Barron River. I rise tonight to talk about Double Island. Double Island is a significant island in the electorate of Barron River. It is three kilometres off the coast of Palm Cove and well renowned as the jewel in the crown for Palm Cove tourism. It is known by its traditional name of Gudju Gudju by the Djabugay people. In their language it is the resting place of the Rainbow Serpent. People like Brad Pitt, Jennifer Aniston, Keanu Reeves and other A-list movie stars have holidayed at Double Island over the years, paying extraordinary amounts for overnight accommodation and everything that goes with it.

Unfortunately, in 2012 the lease for Double Island was purchased by Benny Wu, a Hong Kong billionaire, and a company called Fortune Island Holding and since 2012 barely anything has happened on Double Island. It has fallen into disrepair. There has been no maintenance done. No-one has ever stayed on Double Island since. The beautiful swimming pool where people used to drink expensive cocktails is now full of cane toads and fish and the island is falling down around itself. I can announce to the House that on 7 May the Land Court passed a historic ruling that says that the Minister for Resources does have the legal power to withdraw that lease. It is quite an exciting moment for the people of Cairns and certainly for Palm Cove tourism.

I want to acknowledge members from both sides of this House who have taken up the issue around leaseholds of Queensland islands. I know they include, but are not limited to, the member for Kurwongbah, who chaired the committee, and the member for Condamine in his role as shadow minister and in other roles, as well as plenty of other members of this House. Certainly no-one has taken up this role more tenaciously than the Minister for Resources, the member for Townsville, Scott Stewart, who has been like a dog with a bone on this one. I really want to acknowledge him. It has been a very interesting ride with lots of different advice and legal proceedings and everything, but he has held the line. I know that we can put confidence in him and his department to make the right decisions over the coming weeks and months so that the people of Cairns, Queensland tourism and Palm Cove tourism can get their island back. Finally in relation to that, I can also advise the House that we are working on the Palm Cove jetty with Transport and Main Roads so that we can make that important lifeline to Double Island a reality.