




Speech By
Hon. Michael Healy

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Tourism Industry

 **Hon. MP HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Sport) (10.33 am): Queensland is the nation's top holiday destination. We all know that. The Miles government is determined to keep it that way. Pleasingly, one of our fastest growing areas in domestic tourism is Central Queensland. The latest industry research found that to September last year overnight expenditure in the Mackay region was up over 25 per cent to almost \$800 million over the last three years. That is absolutely unprecedented. In the southern Great Barrier Reef region, which includes Rockhampton, Bundaberg and Gladstone, it was up over 11 per cent to \$1.7 billion. Amazingly, that is a 37 per cent increase in the pre-pandemic figures—absolutely unique.

This is a great result for Central Queensland tourism operators, for local visitor economies and, more importantly, for sustainable industry jobs. The Miles government knows that to continue this growth we must take a longer term view by continuing to invest in the industry but, more importantly, back our tourism operators. That is why yesterday I announced the opening of round 2 of our \$15 million Growing Future Tourism fund.

One of the five recipients of round 1 was the Lindeman Island Resort in the Whitsundays—a once iconic resort that is yet to be restored to its former glory. The funding they will receive will build a fixed 50-metre jetty to allow access to the island—which is pretty important for an island. This will also pave the way for a 210-room, five-star hotel, a golf course and a solar farm. As the island is reborn, it will become a beacon of sustainable development, providing a great example to other developers.

In Townsville, Flinders Street Wharves will get a Marine Tourism Hub featuring marina berths and a floating bar and restaurant. I note that this is a first for North Queensland. On the Sunshine Coast at Australia Zoo, four new, two-storey eco-cabins will be built overlooking a freshwater billabong with crocodile views. On the Gold Coast, Currumbin Wildlife Hospital will get a new research and training precinct where students can gain practical skills in treating native wildlife. On the Brisbane River, a 42-berth marina will be built at Raptis Seafood, where commercial and tourist boats can dock overnight.

This is very important—and I know the Treasurer will be particularly happy with this: our \$15 million investment will leverage a further \$66 million in private investment to make these things happen. We are working with industry to ensure these things move forward. This sort of funding would naturally be at risk under the LNP government. The Miles Labor government invests in tourism, in contrast to when the LNP were last in power. They cut \$188 million from the tourism budget.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr HEALY: The LNP do not get tourism. The LNP never have, and they cannot be trusted.