



Speech By  
**Michael Healy**


**MEMBER FOR CAIRNS**

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## **ADJOURNMENT**

### **TNQ Tourism Industry Excellency Awards**

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (9.06 pm): On Friday night I joined hundreds from our tourism industry celebrating the TNQ Tourism Industry Excellence Awards. It was a celebration of 50 years of the shared vision, resilience and community spirit that built Tropical North Queensland's industry into the \$4.5 billion powerhouse it is today. More than 350 guests gathered at the Cairns Convention Centre to honour half a century since the region's first tourism body, the Far North Queensland Development Bureau, was formed. Among them were founding chair George Chapman who laid the groundwork for what is now Tourism Tropical North Queensland, Australia's oldest and largest regional tourism organisation. TTNQ chair John O'Sullivan spoke of the region's trailblazing pioneers, local families who built the industry from the ground up through innovation and grit. CEO Mark Olsen reflected on five decades of hunting as a pack, a philosophy that has defined this region's cooperative marketing success and remains as relevant today as it has ever been.

It was fitting that the 50-year celebration also introduced a new perpetual trophy, the Robbie Bastion Award for Inbound Marketing, honouring one of our industry's most colourful and beloved characters. The inaugural winner, Andrew Steele, of Hot Air Balloon Cairns and the Gold Coast, epitomises that same relentless drive in global advocacy that Robbie Bastion brought to every boardroom and barstool from Tokyo to Toronto.

Whilst I acknowledge all of the evening's winners and congratulate them I want to make mention of a remarkable man whose contribution can best be described as unparalleled. John Morris's long history of contributing to tourism in our region stretches back from the early 1970s when he developed the first tourism accommodation in Port Douglas. He has not retired. Now at 97 he helped to develop the Douglas Shire development control plan to protect the community's character and over the past five decades has developed much of the tourism infrastructure in Port Douglas, including several resorts, Wildlife Habitat and Port Douglas Marina amongst others.

Tourism in the Far North is not an abstract economy. It is livelihoods, culture and community. It connects reef to rainforest, travellers to locals and the world to the warmth of the Far North. From the first road warriors to today's innovators in sustainable tourism, the TTNQ awards remind us that, while technology, trends and markets may change, one thing endures: the spirit of people such as Robbie Bastion and the many winners over the years who believed fiercely and competitively in this remarkable place where Mother Nature has provided so much. It is an amazing place that we are all so pleased and proud to call home. Congratulations to all winners and those nominated.