

**Question on Notice
No. 751
Asked on 18 June 2004**

MR FINN asked the Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development (Ms Keech)—

QUESTION:

Will she outline the benefits to Queensland of the recently introduced direct flights between Brisbane and Los Angeles?

ANSWER:

I thank the honourable member for his question and acknowledge his keen interest in the tourism industry.

Non-stop flights between Brisbane and Los Angeles commenced from 16 June 2004. Operating three times a week they now give United States visitors direct access to the outstanding tourism product and destinations Queensland has to offer. They are in addition to the daily Qantas flights from Brisbane to Los Angeles via Auckland.

Los Angeles is the main departure point for US travellers, and in addition to adding a further 1,296 seats per week into Brisbane, for the first time Americans can now fly directly to Queensland in 14 hours, saving three to four hours in layovers. It is estimated the new services will generate an extra \$89 million a year for the Queensland economy.

It was a pleasure for me to be a guest of Qantas on the inaugural outbound flight and to be a keynote speaker at a function for key travel wholesalers in Los Angeles, one of the promotional activities Tourism Queensland has undertaken to encourage Americans to fly non-stop to Queensland. Other promotional activities include providing a week long vacation package to be given away with two Qantas flights on the "Tonight Show" and a 10 week "Countdown to Brisbane" campaign targeting key US-based travel industry. Tourism Queensland is also co-organising a luxury media familiarisation featuring journalists from some of the US most elite magazines who travelled to Queensland on the inaugural flight to spend a week visiting some of Queensland's most upmarket tourism product.

Qantas is using Queensland identity Steve Irwin as the key spokesperson for its campaign promoting the new direct Queensland flights. His involvement in the Qantas campaign promoting travel to Queensland is a fantastic coup for Queensland's tourism industry. To promote the new flights, Steve has appeared on the Tonight Show with Jay Leno, the Late Show with Conan O'Brian, Good Morning America and Regis and Kelly.

Tourism Queensland spent several years lobbying Qantas, starting in 2002 with a detailed business case proposing the introduction of direct flights to Queensland. Discussions were ongoing and in January 2004 a detailed market analysis was submitted further highlighting the need for direct access from the US to Queensland.

The North American market is Queensland's fourth largest and one of the most important, not only in terms of visitor numbers but also in actual yield. More than 146,000 North Americans visited Queensland in the year ended December 2003, staying an average 17 nights and spending on average \$3,300 throughout the region. Visitor numbers are expected to increase by three percent by 2008. Greater air access to the North American market is estimated to be worth an extra \$89 million a year to the Queensland economy.