

**Question on Notice  
No. 1617  
Asked on 30 October 2008**

MRS REILLY asked the Minister for Tourism, Regional Development and Industry (MS BOYLE) —

QUESTION:

With reference to the announcement that Jetstar will be starting direct flights between Cairns and the Gold Coast—

How will the Gold Coast benefit from these new direct flights?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Mudgeeraba for the question.

Tourism is a key industry on the Gold Coast and the single biggest driver of local economy. Over 90% of Gold Coast jobs are either directly or indirectly related to tourism, which paints a vivid picture of just how important the industry is to the Gold Coast region. The Bligh Government understands this and we are committed to ensuring that Gold Coast tourism stays strong in tomorrow's Queensland. In order to build on current industry strengths, it is important to ensure that, as well as being a great place to visit with beautiful beaches, picturesque hinterland and plenty of restaurants and shopping opportunities, the Gold Coast is also an easily accessible tourist destination.

The recent announcement by Jetstar that three direct flights per week will commence between Cairns and the Gold Coast from February next year is great news for Queensland. There are some clear benefits to introducing this new service, with 531 seats per week being available on this route.

As Minister for Tourism, I am delighted that two of our top tourism destinations will soon be connected, especially given the current lack of direct services between the two cities.

With the fall of the Australian dollar and the current global economic environment, there is a growing trend for Australians to holiday closer to home and the added services will provide an opportunity for the Gold Coast tourism industry to capitalise on this trend. I encourage all Australians to take a holiday right here in Queensland and with the introduction of the new Jetstar service between the Gold Coast and Cairns, enjoying some of the best tourism experiences our State has to offer will become more convenient.

Furthermore, linking the Gold Coast and Cairns strengthens the opportunity to offer multi-destination tourism packages, particularly to the Japanese market. The new flights will offer streamlined access for the Japanese market with the connection to Jetstar's daily Gold Coast - Osaka service. Visitors from Western Japan will gain access to Cairns following the withdrawal of the Jetstar's Osaka/Nagoya - Cairns services from December. Packaging tourism experiences available on the Gold Coast and in Cairns offers an opportunity to increase Japanese visitation to Queensland by encouraging visitors to experience both the Gold Coast and Cairns. This is an excellent result for our tourism industry which has gone through some challenging times lately. I am especially pleased that the Gold Coast, which heavily relies on tourism to generate local economic growth, will benefit from the new Jetstar services.

In order to remain competitive we need to continuously improve on all aspects of Queensland's tourism product offering. Working to increase services on existing routes and new route development are just some of the items on the Bligh Government's agenda. The Bligh Government will continue to work with the industry to improve airline access to destinations across Queensland's regions as part of our investment in the strength of local tourism industries in tomorrow's Queensland.