



Brent MICKELBERG MP

Member for **Buderim**

Media Release

9 June 2020

Tourism funding fair play

The Sunshine Coast is urging the Queensland Premier to allocate \$1 million in funding so Visit Sunshine Coast can urgently initiate an intensive marketing campaign to attract Queensland visitors over the winter period.

The call comes after the Palaszczuk Government provided \$2.4 million each to the Gold Coast and Tropical North Queensland Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs) – a move which places those markets at a distinct advantage when marketing to Queensland tourists.

In a joint letter to the Premier from Sunshine Coast Council and Visit Sunshine Coast, it was acknowledged that while the \$2.4 million received by Gold Coast and Tropical North Queensland RTOs in February this year was in recognition of the loss of their international visitor market in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, both had now pivoted their marketing efforts to focus on the Queensland visitor.

State Member for Buderim and Shadow Assistant Minister for Tourism Industry Development Brent Mickelberg MP joined with Council and Visit Sunshine Coast to call for the commitment of immediate additional funding from the Palaszczuk Government to support the region's destination marketing efforts.

"Sunshine Coast tourism and hospitality businesses have been among the hardest hit across the State,"

"Given the Sunshine Coast economy is heavily reliant on the success of small and medium tourism businesses, ensuring our local businesses are able to recover is essential".

"The last thing our local businesses should have to contend with is an unfair situation where their Gold Coast and Far North Queensland competitors are given a leg up at their expense".

"RTOs are best placed to identify and sell the attributes of places like the Sunshine Coast and that is why the work of Visit Sunshine Coast is so important", Mr Mickelberg said.

Sunshine Coast Council Mayor Mark Jamieson said the additional \$2.4 million provided to each of those RTOs means they are now actively competing against the Sunshine Coast for intrastate visitors, which is a market that has traditionally been a major source for our region.

Let's get Queensland working again

“What we now have is a situation where the Sunshine Coast and its tourism industry are having to fight for market share with one hand tied behind their back, due to an inability to compete on a level playing field with the Gold Coast and Far North Queensland,” Mayor Jamieson said.

“We understand that this is a competitive business, but as the Sunshine Coast tourism industry is attempting to recover from the impacts of the pandemic, what our region should not have to contend with is competitors whose marketing efforts have been significantly financed by the Queensland Government – our own state government.”

“Sunshine Coast has outstanding natural attractions”.

“However if our tourism industry is to have any prospect of recovery and local tourism businesses are to revitalise and begin employing local people, it is essential that Visit Sunshine Coast can compete on a level playing field with its major competitors in Far North Queensland and the Gold Coast.”

Visit Sunshine Coast Chairperson David Ryan said with the prospect of Queensland borders remaining closed for some time, our region faced losing out on its traditionally-strong winter trade from the southern States and New Zealand.

“The indications are the majority of Sunshine Coast tourism businesses will lose between 90% and 100% of their revenues for the March quarter and even with intrastate restrictions relaxed from June 1, revenues for the June-September quarter are estimated to be less than 30% of normal revenues” Mr Ryan said.

“The Palaszczuk Government’s announcement of an additional \$50 million in funding for tourism infrastructure and the creation of a new destination marketing campaign was welcome news for the industry, as was the recent commitment by Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) of additional funding to all 13 RTOs across the State for destination marketing activities aligned with the State’s campaign”.

“However, the Gold Coast and Far North Queensland RTOs are in a far better position to compete for the Queensland visitor dollar and will also be well-positioned nationally for the domestic travel market when State borders re-open, thanks to the \$2.4 million which they each received from the State Government”.

“There is a very real distortion that exists when one RTO – namely Visit Sunshine Coast – is not a beneficiary of significant State assistance to advance its destination marketing efforts.”

ENDS