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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

G20

SPEECH

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Questioner
Speaker Entsch, Warren, MP

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Mr ENTSCH (Leichhardt) (12:53): It is certainly a pleasure for me to speak to this private member's motion put up by my good friend the member for Brisbane. It is no doubt that hosting the G20 finance ministers and central bank governors meeting in Cairns in September, followed by the leaders meeting in Brisbane in November, is a massive coup for Queensland. The Cairns meeting on 20 and 21 September will bring about 2,000 people to our city, including the finance ministers and treasurers of the world's strongest economies, international and domestic media, and staff and representatives of organisations such as the United Nations.

Since the news was announced in August 2012, the Cairns business community and the Cairns Regional Council have jumped on board to ensure that the region is showcased to the best of its ability. At that time, Mayor Bob Manning said the news would 'make locals walk another inch higher off the ground'. Cairns Regional Council and the state government are now well underway in the project to revamp the city centre, and I congratulate them for that.

Visiting Cairns last year, Treasury heads described Cairns as an 'exotic and exciting destination for our guests', and there is no doubt that the economic benefits to and exposure of our region will be significant. We have so many assets—a temperate climate, an incredible natural environment, a cosmopolitan city, a broad array of tourism activities—all combined with warm and hospitable service.

It is hard to put a dollar value on it, but in 2010, the University of Toronto measured the benefits of previous G20 and G8 conferences. They found that the host city received benefits in the short term from tourism, accommodation, plane fares and 'advertising', both written stories and direct advertising. In the longer term, the economic benefit comes from business investment. Interestingly, the authors of the study found that the economic benefits were bigger for the cities with a lower international profile. It said: 'In general, the benefits are much greater for the smaller communities and cities that lack the global visibility and infrastructure that the capital cities of the past several centuries have developed.' This bodes well for Cairns.

Representatives of the 24 countries involved, including the US, China, Japan, Germany and the UK, will start arriving two weeks beforehand, while the bulk of visitors, including up to 100 media, will arrive two days before. Already, 2,000 rooms have been booked at the five top hotels in Cairns, extending to Palm Cove, for the heads of delegation, delegates, and Queensland Police Service, Comcar and Commonwealth staff, in contracts worth more than \$2 million.

According to the G20 website, most local jobs working at the event will be with our local service providers such as venues, catering providers and accommodation. We are fortunate in Cairns that we already have a diverse and highly experienced hospitality and tourism sector on hand. Businesses in the immediate vicinity of the Cairns Convention Centre area will be able to take advantage of having thousands of international visitors in the area. Many others will be involved through G20 service providers, including venues, transport, accommodation and security. Closer to the date, local services such as labour hire, interior design, local performers, AV services and transport and IT services may be needed. I would urge any locals or businesses who are interested in assisting to keep an eye on the *Cairns Post*, the G20 website, the Cairns Chamber of Commerce, the AusTender website and other online channels.

Australia's mission to use its leadership of the G20 to drive global growth, and the decision at February's meeting of finance ministers to set a specific global growth target, are being well received. At the meeting, the G20 struck a landmark deal to lift global economic activity by US\$2 trillion over the next five years, potentially creating tens of millions of jobs across the globe. For Australia's part, Treasurer Joe Hockey stressed that unless we undertake structural reforms and implement the promises we took to last year's election, our economy will fail to develop. Joe said: 'We all know the challenges that lie ahead, but now's the time to go for growth.'

Cairns has had a tough time of it in the past seven years, but I can confirm that we are absolutely geared for growth. I welcome the Prime Minister's initiative to encourage partners and spouses to travel up to Cairns. If they do that they will find great reasons to spend a bit of extra time there and perhaps, sometime down the track, will bring other family members and friends to Cairns. We are certainly on the cusp of a very exciting time and I am looking forward to the G20 being a real kick-start for our Far North economy and for Queensland's economy more broadly.