



Speech by
**Hon. NITA
CUNNINGHAM**

MEMBER FOR BUNDABERG

Hansard 12 December 2001

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Mission Beach, Effluent Disposal

Hon. J. I. CUNNINGHAM (Bundaberg—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Planning) (10.07 a.m.), by leave: I am pleased to announce more good news for far-north Queensland. Mission Beach, in the electorate of the member for Hinchinbrook, would have to be one of the most beautiful destinations in Queensland and, being in far-north Queensland, is in one of our state's most popular tourist destinations.

Despite its tropical paradise nature, Mission Beach has suffered for far too long from a very earthy problem and one this government has taken positive steps to address. For years now, the Johnstone and Cardwell shires, which both count parts of the Mission Beach area within their borders, have tried to address the problem of effluent disposal. Mission Beach is not seweraged and septic systems have proven to bring widespread problems in an area with such high rainfall, high water table and close proximity to the reef.

Just four weeks ago I inspected the problems first-hand with mayors and representatives of both councils, following their representation to me at the LGAQ conference in Townsville in September. I can say quite unequivocally that I shared the councils' concerns about the potential health and environmental problems being caused by the situation in Mission Beach and I was determined that something be done about it. On Monday, I announced to the two councils that the Beattie Labor government will give approval for a \$15.5 million subsidy to provide a sewerage system for Mission Beach.

Mr McGrady: Good Christmas present.

Mrs NITA CUNNINGHAM: Santa Claus came that day.

The system will be connected to Mission Beach, Wongaling Beach and South Mission Beach. It will involve pumping effluent to Tully for treatment at a new state-of-the-art treatment plant. \$11.7 million of this subsidy will be provided under the Smaller Communities Assistance Program—the largest subsidy provided under that funding scheme so far. The situation in Mission Beach clearly could not be allowed to continue. This project involves the cooperation of both councils, and I place on the public record my appreciation of their determination to work together on this massive project, which will take several years to complete. However, the benefits are obvious—for residents, for visitors and for the fragile reef environment.

In addition, this project shows those councils and residents that the Beattie Labor government means it when it says it is governing for all Queenslanders, wherever they live. This project is a major commitment to Mission Beach and to far-north Queensland and one I was happy to make a reality.
