



Speech by

Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Hansard Wednesday, 12 October 2011

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Regional Airports, Upgrades

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs (2.19 pm): The Bligh government is providing the transport infrastructure needed for regional communities. Last month I joined the local member for Mount Isa, Betty Kiernan, and the mayor of the Diamantina Shire Council, Councillor Robbie Dare, to open new airport terminals at Birdsville and Bedourie. Those two new, state-of-the-art terminals were part of a \$1.5 million upgrade of Birdsville Airport and a \$1.14 million upgrade at Bedourie. In the past three years regular flooding has cut off Birdsville and Bedourie from the road network for up to six months, making those new facilities essential.

Earlier this year, I visited the \$390,000 refurbishment of the Innisfail Airport, which will help keep communities connected during the wet season by allowing the Hercules aircraft to use the airstrip during natural disasters. Recently I was in Atherton, where I announced that we would be providing a sealed taxiway to make life easier and safer for the Royal Flying Doctor Service and others.

Airport infrastructure is critical when it comes to providing isolated communities with medical services, food and access to essential services that are taken for granted in bigger towns and cities. Together with the local councils, we are making sure people have access to essential medical and educational services, even during extreme weather like flooding. However, it does not stop there.

Today I am pleased to announce that we are investing more than \$2.1 million to upgrade regional airports around Queensland. Those projects will be delivered with local councils, which will match our funding. This government is for all Queenslanders, whether they live in the south-east, the regions or the remote areas of our great state. This current round of airport funding supports our regional centres including Barcaldine, Blackall, Tully and Charters Towers. It will provide practical things like new animal-proof perimeter fences for Moura, Boulia and Warwick. We are resealing the runways at Lockhart River, Camooweal, Julia Creek, Cloncurry and Taroom.

This is essential investment. This is about keeping families connected and connecting families to services. It is a fundamental project. The Bligh government is committed to it and we will continue to match funding into the future.