



Speech by


**Hon. Curtis Pitt**

**MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE**

Hansard Thursday, 8 September 2011

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## **JUBILEE BRIDGE**

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (3.43 pm): When the soul of the Innisfail community was restored after Cyclone Larry, eyes turned to the need to fix something at the heart of the town: the Jubilee Bridge, built in 1923. After many months of surgery and countless bypasses, mainly by residents of east Innisfail who needed to get to town for work or school, the town's main artery is no longer clogged and can now flow freely. Last Saturday, I joined the Premier and the mayor of the Cassowary Coast Regional Council to officially open the new Jubilee Bridge. Thanks go to the council and to local community service organisations that helped to ensure that the event ran smoothly.

The upgrade of the bridge has been my No. 1 priority for Innisfail. I was determined to seek funding from whatever sources that were available to see this vital piece of infrastructure delivered. I am very proud that the government that I belong to stepped up and recognised the significance of this project to the community. The Bligh government contributed \$14 million out of the \$21.6 million dollar project. Without the state government's commitment, this project would never have been possible.

The project was significant for many reasons, but none more so than the 140 jobs created over the life of the project at a time when we needed them most. During the past 18 months, there were many challenges to contend with. A load limit was applied to the old bridge which meant that heavy vehicles, including emergency service vehicles, needed to take a longer indirect route, adding up to six minutes to response times. The full closure of the old bridge in July last year meant big changes for many, not only to their routines but also to their hip-pockets.

The earlier than expected closure was regrettable but, of course, it was necessary. The risk was simply too great for the sake of convenience. I know the council and contractor, BMD-Albem, pulled out all stops to ensure the works were completed as quickly as possible to minimise disruption. To the local residents, particularly those from east Innisfail, I say, 'Thank you for your patience.' Congratulations to all those involved with the planning and design. Congratulations go particularly to the workers on the construction of the bridge. It is 15.8 metres wide and 113 metres long. It was made with 1,360 tonnes of cement and 630 tonnes of steel. It truly is a magnificent achievement.