




Speech By
Scott Stewart

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Central Queensland University, Townsville Campus

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (2.30 pm): I would like to take this opportunity to inform the House of a recent event in the Townsville electorate that I attended along with the member for Thuringowa and the member for Burdekin. On 28 April I had the pleasure of attending the opening of the Central Queensland University's Townsville campus, which is located in the Townsville CBD. While the campus is somewhat of a symbol of infrastructure and development in the city, the campus is more importantly a symbol of evolution in the north.

Vice-Chancellor Scott Bowman officially opened the \$3 million campus, which was the vision of Mayor Jenny Hill and businessman Peter Honeycombe, who not only saw the need for a second competing interest in tertiary education in the city but also saw more the ideal of creating opportunities for greater progress and development in the north. The university has positioned itself in Townsville as it sees the potential that the northern region of Queensland has and foresaw the need for some specific courses that are not available to students currently living in Townsville.

The campus will support more than 600 current distance education students and will allow growth in face-to-face programs including paramedic science, nursing, law, education and psychology. The Townsville campus includes large teaching spaces for class and residential schools, computer and videoconferencing labs, a paramedic science lab, a library, staff offices, study spaces and a reception area. Not only will the campus support face-to-face learning, but students can also access a range of extended services including careers advice, counselling and scholarship support.

More importantly, the CQU Townsville campus will create opportunities for students living in rural and remote areas in North Queensland to access university courses. With the potential to develop partnerships with a range of industries including defence, health and education, CQU are interested in creating opportunities to extend the learning and skill development for people of the north.

Knowledge is the new commodity and Australia is abundant with this resource and, by tapping into the NBN infrastructure, learning will become more accessible through a range of modes. More importantly, CQU understand the importance of Townsville as a strategic hub not only for North Queensland but also for Northern Australia. Its geographic location, climate and supporting infrastructure provides the ideal location as a northern staging point for future trade and development.

Recent predictions of the world's population indicates that by 2050 more than half of the world's population will be situated in the tropical zone located between the Tropic of Capricorn and the Tropic of Cancer. This will mean that in excess of five billion people could be living in the tropical band around the world. This will present the world with some significant challenges including issues such as adequate shelter, food supply, health services and education delivery, just to name a few. As a

state we need to think and plan for our role in being able to support the world's population living in such a small and confined area in only 35 years time.

As a state we need to think about and strategically align ourselves as a primary producer, enabling us to be a viable and sustainable food supplier. Our cattle industry is on the cusp of rapid expansion as the Asian markets are showing increased interest in the quality of our beef. The recent increases of live exports through the Townsville port show that we are able to supply the world's dining tables with high quality beef exported from the north. It is the same Port of Townsville that is going gangbusters and exporting live exports to neighbouring Asian countries that the former LNP government wanted to sell to the highest bidder.

Similarly, we need to continue to develop world-class healthcare practices that will meet the needs of our own communities and those of our neighbours. JCU, and now CQU, are providing for the future with highly trained and skilled healthcare workers that will meet the needs of our growing population.

The Townsville General Hospital currently provides service to over 600,000 people living in Northern Australia and close countries including Papua New Guinea and the islands of the South Pacific. It is imperative that we continue to be at the forefront of healthcare services for the people of North Queensland. By having CQU establish a campus in Townsville, it encourages our school leavers to study in the city in which they live and thereby they are more likely to transition to work in that same city. More importantly, it provides confidence in the wider community so that investment and development will help reignite the economy that has been left floundering over the last three years. We welcome CQU to Townsville knowing that it will not only serve our city but empower future generations to meet the challenges of living in a world that is ever changing and ever challenging.