




Speech By
Scott Stewart

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

Record of Proceedings, 15 September 2015

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Townsville Electorate

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (12.12 pm): Today I rise to outline what the Palaszczuk government is doing in my electorate of Townsville to get the local economy moving and reducing the unemployment levels left over from the former Newman government and further add comments to the Treasurer's statements earlier today. The tropics covers 40 per cent of the world's surface but hosts approximately 80 per cent of its terrestrial biodiversity and more than 95 per cent of its mangrove and coral reef based biodiversity. The world's tropical economy is growing 20 per cent faster than the rest of the world and many tropical nations are important contributors to world trade, politics and innovation. The tropics are home to 40 per cent of the world's population and 55 per cent of the world's children under the age of five years old. By 2050, some 50 per cent of the world's population and close to 60 per cent of the world's children are expected to reside in the tropics. Advances in technology are providing a platform for expanding business opportunities, enhancing prospects to reduce poverty and improving education and health outcomes. Incomes are higher, infrastructure is more accessible and life expectancy is the highest it has ever been.

Two weeks ago the Premier was in Townsville to address the Redefining Townsville forum along with James Cook University Vice-Chancellor Sandra Harding, CEO of Wellard's live cattle exports Mauro Balzarini and Dr Geoff Garrett, Queensland's Chief Scientist, among others. The forum attracted many key investors, business and industry people, educators, farmers and graziers all wanting to know and wanting to hear what we can best do to position ourselves as global leaders in an ever-challenging and changing world. The message was very clear: we need to unlock on the world stage the potential that Townsville has due to its geographical location; its established infrastructure assets, including a world-class port; its synergy between other economic regions including Cairns, Mackay, Charters Towers and Mount Isa; and its strong research base spearheaded by James Cook University.

In late July Townsville hosted the annual Developing Northern Australia Conference aimed at covering the critical issues associated with the region extending north of the Tropic of Capricorn with an area of approximately three million square kilometres and a population of approximately one million people. Key drivers of the conference included agriculture, mining, energy, tourism and other emerging sectors. The conference was opened by the member for Mundingburra and the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland, the Hon. Coralee O'Rourke, and keynote speakers offered access to practical solutions and strategies that assist the development of sustainable practice in areas of liveability and healthy cities and the built environment, waste management and recycling, natural resources and renewable energy, population growth and food production, and regional development.

In August Minister Coralee O'Rourke hosted an economic round table in Townsville for key business and industry leaders, developers, investors, educators and leaders in the community seeking their input as to the strategic direction and key drivers to get the local economy moving and creating

jobs. In September Townsville Enterprise Ltd released its work titled *Opportunity Townsville* that unpacks the key infrastructure and develops initiatives that are either recently completed or underway in the approval process in Townsville. The research shows that there is currently \$997 million worth of either federal, local or state government projects currently underway and \$3.26 billion in private investment in projects in Townsville. With a total of over \$4.2 billion in aged care, defence, education, health, residential, retail and infrastructure projects just to name a few, Townsville is starting to show what local investors are calling green shoots.

Finally, on Wednesday, 3 September Jetstar launched its first direct flights from Townsville to Bali, making Townsville Airport an international airport once again. Regular flights have commenced and new routes are being considered for the future to help grow the tourism industry in the region. The Palaszczuk government continues to invest in Townsville and continues to work with local community, industry and business leaders in Townsville through these and many more opportunities. Townsville is truly open for business and ready to be a key player as Queensland's and Australia's front door to the Asian region.