




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Central Queensland University

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (12.31 pm): On 9 August, just seven days ago, an important event occurred in an area off Flinders Street in Townsville where representatives of the traditional owners, the Wulgurukaba and Bindal peoples, joined fellow passionate and dedicated community members at a special Indigenous ceremony where elders of these groups told stories of their youth and their families working on the railway where the site of the Central Queensland University is being expanded. They performed a special smoking ceremony on that same site where this important development of the CQU university campus is now being built. Collaboratively, all involved on that day are in some way responsible in the taking forward of the priority development area, or PDA, for the people of Townsville.

Representatives from both traditional owner groups, including well respected Aunty Gracelyn Smallwood, joined the Central Queensland University vice-chancellor Kari Arbouin and staff, along with city representatives, the member for Townsville, local government representatives and members of Honeycombes Property Group who are now building the CQU campus on the site. This is important because this multimillion dollar CQU investment in the building of the city campus means that we now have a major anchor tenant as part of the Palaszczuk government's investment of \$140 million into the Townsville stadium area. The campus is alongside the PDA area.

CQU forms part of our city story. In the future perhaps emerging city elders and representatives will stand on the same site and tell stories of this period of time where the collaboration of government, business and community was pivotal in the overall urban redevelopment of our fine city of Townsville for the people of North Queensland. This news provides encouragement and much needed positivity for the business, private and construction sector. We are restoring business confidence. This job alone provides up to 200 local jobs. It is a \$30 million investment and it is a sure sign that our election commitment of delivering the \$250 million Townsville stadium is indeed a real catalyst for infrastructure investment to deliver more jobs in Townsville for Townsville families.

Many constituents who have contacted me in Thuringowa are excited by this proposition. CQU is providing a range of courses for locals, including something close to my heart which is the paramedical science degree. I have a good working relationship with the vice-chancellor. Many former peers from my previous vocation as a paramedic are now teaching the paramedical science degree at the CQU Townsville campus. They bring real important life experience to the classroom for future paramedics who will also hopefully gain employment locally.

Mr Peter Honeycombe has a vision for investment in this space and should be commended for his belief in Townsville and that our city is big enough for two universities. I am not taking anything away from James Cook University, which also contributes so much into our local economy. They provide

great and commendable work in the areas of medicine, nursing, research, science, agriculture and the environment. They are just some of the impressive areas that I have seen firsthand when visiting JCU.

Recently I had the opportunity to tour the Brisbane CQU city campus in Ann Street. It too is impressive and provides some real insight into the Townsville redevelopment of CQU. CQU hopes to reach 3,000 students over the coming years and is seeing good growth in numbers since their arrival in our city in 2010. As reported in the *Townsville Bulletin* yesterday—Monday, 15 August—by the vice-chancellor—

'There is no doubt CQU's investment in infrastructure, support services and new courses in Townsville have shown that local students are reacting positively to additional support and course options,' she said. 'We are constantly fielding queries and interest and expect many more at our CQUni Townsville Open Day next month.'

This campus is being fast-tracked and we expect to see it finished in the first few months of 2017. I commend CQU's investment in Townsville and welcome the real jobs it will bring into our local economy.