




Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Record of Proceedings, 14 June 2016

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Aurukun

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.38 am): My government wants to see the community of Aurukun thrive and be a strong, safe and supported community. Our vision for Aurukun can only be realised when it is owned by the community. When driven by the community's leaders, elders and members, and supported by all levels of government, real and sustainable change can happen. My government is working hard to contribute to that vision.

During my visit on 27 May, I had the opportunity to speak with and, more importantly, to listen to the community. As a government, we can best assist by supporting actions and initiatives led by the community. While some of those actions are immediate, others are more complex and require continued effort. Working hand in glove with the community and council, a four-point plan sets out the key areas of action.

Firstly, we want Aurukun to be a place where workers and residents are safe and supported to contribute positively to the community. There are 23 police deployed in Aurukun, maintaining a 24/7 presence. That will continue. Vehicle patrols are conducted overnight. There will also be an increase in foot patrols. There is also an enhanced presence of security officers. The Aurukun Shire Council also employs up to 10 local people as community police officers. These community police officers assist with patrolling during the day and safeguarding assets at night. Practical solutions have been agreed with the community, including extending the CCTV network and improving lighting and security.

Secondly, education is key to a more prosperous future. Access to education in Aurukun is my government's priority. We want to see our children and young people get to school every day in an environment where our teachers feel safe and supported. We are working on arrangements so that at the start of term 3, 11 July, teachers and students can return to their classrooms.

A review of education delivery in Aurukun is being undertaken by education minister Kate Jones, who also joined me on my recent visit to Aurukun. It is expected that the review will be finalised this month and the government will then consider the recommendations. In the meantime, students are being supported to access distance education services by an interim principal. Around 90 students have been attending school daily. The interim principal is being assisted by teachers, the PCYC and other staff. As of last Friday there are seven teachers in Aurukun assisting with the distance education program and doing a remarkable job.

Thirdly, we are building the community of Aurukun through a collaborative partnership with council and the community. A well-respected community advocate with experience working in Aurukun has been appointed as a senior government coordinator. Senior Sergeant Brendon McMahon

commenced on 30 May and continues to coordinate government and the community working together on these important issues. Round tables are also being held to ensure members of the community have a voice and can contribute collaboratively.

The last round table was held on 1 June and was hosted jointly by the mayor and government champion and Director-General of the Department of State Development Michael Schaumberg. The community wants to be heard and wants to contribute to change, evidenced by the attendance of more than 60 people. Participants were clear about taking the lead on issues impacting their community, with support from government.

The Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships continued these discussions when he also visited Aurukun on 6 June. Sustainable communities are connected communities, both in terms of people and technology. We are also working closely with Telstra to install a 4G cable to connect Aurukun. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2017. My government will do what we can to help expedite this process.

Finally, a thriving community is one that has jobs and economic opportunities. I am advised that there are jobs available in Aurukun, but we need to ensure the skills match the roles available. There are many initiatives already available to help achieve this. We just need to harness those opportunities. We are doing this through engagement with the federal government and Cape York Employment to ensure readiness for the jobs available right now and those in the pipeline.

My government will ensure this momentum continues and real progress is made. Sustainable change to build a thriving community can only be achieved when we all work together.