




Speech By
Julieanne Gilbert

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Mackay Electorate, Accelerated Works Program

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (12.24 pm): I must say, I do agree with the member for Whitsunday: we need to retain the services of the BOM. I wish to speak to the House about the Accelerated Works Program in the Mackay region. One only has to walk through the city of Mackay to see the many empty shops and businesses, which closed down in the aftermath of the Newman government's reign of havoc in Queensland. One only has to drive around the suburban streets to see many properties for sale or rent, left vacant since public sector jobs were slashed by the former state LNP government. The effects of job losses have been catastrophic to my electorate. This is the price that my region has had to pay for the neglect of the Newman government. The Newman government not only ruthlessly slashed jobs, but also neglected major projects in my area and surrounding electorates. Major infrastructure projects such as rebuilding the Vines Creek bridges, which is a vital link between the port of Mackay and the Bruce Highway, wallowed in embarrassing disrepair, ignored by the LNP government. As a direct result of the Newman government's irresponsible and ruthless management, the number of local families who have had their homes foreclosed are many. Those people could not manage to get buyers in the decimated local property market before banks moved in. Bankruptcies, mental health issues and suicide have become far too prevalent.

Since the ousting of the Newman government a year ago, people in the region have been calling out for clear and decisive action from the government to help rebuild the economy and restore people's livelihoods, and the Palaszczuk government has responded. More than 60,000 jobs have been created in Queensland since the state election. In the 2015 budget, delivered only five months after forming government, the Palaszczuk government committed \$28 million to rebuild the Vines Creek bridges. That project alone will bring jobs and infinite opportunities. Ours is a port region. The port of Mackay and the port of Hay Point are priority ports. Right at our doorstep we have available land in commercial and industrial estates and opportunities for a supply chain development of domestic and international trade. Unlike our predecessors, the Palaszczuk government recognises the importance of this and other vital projects and has taken action to make those a priority. Thanks to the Palaszczuk government's Accelerated Works Program, we will see over \$75 million worth of projects, including the rebuilding of the Vines Creek bridges, fast-tracked to put Mackay back on the road to recovery.

Just some of the accelerated works projects for Mackay and surrounding regions include: the Woodlands Estate Andergrove stage 7, \$1.71 million and stage 8, \$2.93 million; wharf 4 and 5, fender and wharf upgrades, \$8.5 million; Mackay port navigation lights upgrade, \$400,000; overtaking lanes on the Bruce Highway, \$8.15 million; Abbot Point material offloading facility, \$4.25 million; Hay Point material offloading facility, \$2.5 million; Mackay harbour east upgrade of intersection and port road, \$1.1 million; maintenance projects across eight schools in Mackay and the Bowen Basin, \$3.9 million; and let us not forget \$28 million for the Vines Creek bridges. That is over \$60 million worth of projects.

The Palaszczuk government has also committed \$23 million towards the Eton Range Peak Downs Highway project, which is currently awaiting approvals under federal government environmental legislation. Those projects will provide opportunities for local tradespeople and contractors. Those jobs will have a positive flow-on effect to other sectors, including retail, hospitality and tourism, restimulating our local economy and providing opportunities in our region to rebuild, strengthen and diversify. The Accelerated Works Program is a great initiative that will have profound and positive effects, not only on my region's economy but also on the morale of the people who live and raise their families there.