



Speech By  
**Hon. Leeanne Enoch**


**MEMBER FOR ALGESTER**

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## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

### **Advance Queensland**

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (9.49 am): The Palaszczuk government is continuing to support growth in Queensland's regions through an investment of an additional \$49.5 million for regional innovation under the Advance Queensland initiative. Queensland is Australia's most decentralised state with large populations in regional centres such as Cairns, Townsville, Mackay and Toowoomba.

The Palaszczuk government recognises that our regional centres represent a unique economic opportunity to harness and build on our diverse regional strengths. Our regions are also home to some of the state's most innovative entrepreneurs. To support their growth, the Palaszczuk government is committing \$6 million over three years to support the development of regional innovation hubs across Queensland. These hubs will assist innovation by connecting locals, leveraging key regional strengths and lifting the capability of innovative local firms. The hubs will be interconnected, creating a network of innovation and collaboration right across the state.

This program will collaborate with locally based champions to build localised communities that are connected by place, leadership and learning. This will ensure regional Queenslanders have the tools to provide solutions to local, national and global social and business challenges, ensuring their industries and businesses remain competitive to drive growth in local economies and jobs. A further \$10 million will be put towards an innovation hub in Cairns, located on the James Cook University campus.

In March, I released the *Regional Queensland Startup Ecosystem* report, which highlighted the potential value of start-up ecosystems across regional Queensland. The report identified Cairns as having the highest start-up rate per capita outside South-East Queensland. There is already a lot of work happening in our regions with some exciting new technologies and innovations that will contribute to the growth of local industries and create jobs now and jobs into the future. The Palaszczuk government's Advance Queensland grant programs such as the start-up Queensland fund and the Young Starters Fund continue to provide assistance to regional Queensland to deliver entrepreneurial and start-up related activities that build capability.

Our regions may also play host to international start-ups through the Advance Queensland Hot DesQ program. Their unique locations and industry strengths will attract start-ups from around the world. Through Hot DesQ they will relocate for at least six months, providing local entrepreneurs with access to new skills, talent and global connections. Our government remains committed to supporting Queensland innovation and entrepreneurship to diversify the economy and create jobs. I look forward to providing further updates in the future.