




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Townsville Electorate, Innovation

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (11.50 am): I rise today to make members of this House aware of the outstanding work that is happening in Townsville in the innovation space. This past week I had the pleasure of attending the launch of Innovation IQ—or iNQ—a not-for-profit association that is led by industry experts and innovators who have created a centre that is focused on supporting and nurturing future innovators and entrepreneurs. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Minister for Science, Innovation and the Digital Economy, the Hon. Leeanne Enoch, for coming to my beautiful city and supporting this launch. iNQ is emerging in the Townsville innovation ecosystem as an important catalyst site for economics, knowledge and social growth. Importantly, it has the support of key local innovators and business leaders Sister City Partners and Honeycombes Property Group. The association is also an Advance Queensland Hot DesQ program host location. Hot DesQ is an innovative program designed to attract international and interstate start-ups to Queensland, bringing their experience and international connections to Queensland's ecosystem. The Hot DesQ start-ups visit for at least six months to pursue their businesses and help grow the entrepreneurial sector in the state.

Innovation IQ started as a brainstorming session with a range of groups and city leaders in November 2015 led by Joe Hoolihan and Warwick Powell. These two men took those initial ideas and turned them into a centre that now supports, nurtures and mentors new ideas. It is through great ideas and innovation like this that the Palaszczuk government committed an additional \$6 million to support regional innovation hubs. This new \$6 million fund will provide grants to support a range of activities to build innovation ecosystems across Queensland just like the one in Townsville. This funding will be used to help create the 'glue' which builds and strengthens local networks and helps everyone locally work together and turn ideas into new products and services and, ultimately, local jobs.

The official launch was a star-studded event and was attended by our very own *Shark Tank* member Glen Richards, who took Greencross Vets from a successful local business and turned it into an international venture. Perhaps one of the most inspiring people at the launch was Hamish Finlayson, who has developed four apps already. Two of his apps teach people of all ages to think about the waste they throw into our oceans and the impact this has on marine life, particularly turtles. One of his apps, entitled Awesome Foundation App, helps young people with ASD cope with, and provide solutions to, sensory overload. Hamish is an entrepreneur who attracted \$16,000 in crowdfunding in his first attempt to seek funding sources online to support his app development and marketing, but it does not finish there. Hamish won a scholarship to attend the Global Summit on Education, or GSE2016, in the USA. He was one of only nine Australians in the 700-strong group from around the world who had the opportunity to pitch their ideas to 300 international investors. Hamish is 11 years old.

Innovation IQ as a business incubator hosts SafetyCulture, which is another example of a homegrown success with the ability to scale globally. SafetyCulture's CEO, Luke Anear, has recently opened an international office in Manchester, England, yet his head office is still based in Townsville, North Queensland. The Palaszczuk government wants to work with people like Glen Richards, Luke Anear and Hamish Finlayson because we are committed to fostering a climate of innovation in our state to ensure we are prepared for the economy of the future. Our government understands the opportunities that innovation presents for growth in both new and existing industries right around our state, which is reflected by the commitment of \$405 million to our whole-of-government Accelerating Advance Queensland innovation initiative. It is the centrepiece of our government's agenda to stimulate the economy and create an environment which encourages innovation to drive business growth not only in Townsville but across the state.

The Palaszczuk government is also investing in existing companies to help them develop their innovative ideas to take local, national and global markets. Townsville Engineering Industries, a 50-year-old company, is embracing innovation by developing new sensor technologies for the mining and sugar industries and has been provided funding through the government's Knowledge Transfer Partnerships program. Advance Queensland is making a tangible difference in Townsville, and I believe it will be—

(Time expired)