




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACKAY

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Mackay Electorate, Innovation

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (2.39 pm): The Mackay region is jumping on the innovation bandwagon. The Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday regional councils have created the economic body called the Greater Whitsunday Alliance, known as the GW3. The GW3 has received \$500,000 of Advance Queensland funding under the Advancing Regional Innovation Program. The funding will encourage local entrepreneurs, business leaders and key industries to work together to strengthen the region's diverse economy.

Already, the Mackay region has, through the GW3, formed collaborative partnerships with many innovative groups, like Split Spaces, Startup Mackay, the Innovation Centre, the Resource Industry Network and Central Queensland University. The network will build outreach locations throughout the regional areas and link them together for true regional innovation. This strategy will ensure people living in remote areas will be able to take part in these important programs. The collaboration will help the Mackay region develop our opportunities emerging in tourism, agriculture and mining equipment, technology and services. My electorate is determined to develop every innovative business opportunity and deliver jobs. Our aim is to position ourselves globally as an innovative, friendly area offering investment benefits for entrepreneurs, venture capitalists and large corporations.

Mackay businesses are also accessing the Small Business Digital Grants Program under the Palaszczuk government's Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy. The Small Business Digital Grants Program provides funding to help recipients embrace digital technologies and opportunities by empowering businesses to be digitally savvy. It is important to provide our regional and innovative businesses with the tools to know how to sell their products online and to give businesses the opportunity to sell locally, regionally, statewide, nationally and globally.

Jody Euler, owner of redhotblue, said the grants will allow her to undertake upgrades to her website using the latest in innovation and coding. She will make her website interactive, educational and visually stimulating and provide different ways to deliver services. She told me that the grant will make her business more competitive and help her employ more Queenslanders. Advance Queensland research fellow Kameron Dunn will receive \$180,000 over three years to develop the biocommodity industry of turning sugarcane waste into liquid fuels and chemicals. This research can develop new diverse industries for agriculture—

(Time expired)