




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Achievements

 **Hon. M FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (12.19 pm): The Palaszczuk government has made a commitment to represent all Queenslanders regardless of where they live. Our government has listened. Across the state we have listened to locals and to the councils that represent them. The Palaszczuk government is delivering funds for critical projects—critical projects identified by those who will benefit the most. There is no doubt we are boosting regional economies. Perhaps, most importantly, we are delivering jobs. We are delivering jobs where they are needed the most.

The 2016-17 Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program is the backbone of local infrastructure in our hugely decentralised state. In the 2016-17 funding year \$30.65 million in grants is being delivered to councils for shovel-ready projects to build vital community infrastructure. In 2016-17 the Palaszczuk government is funding 99 projects for 44 councils via the Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program. These councils have told us that these 99 projects will not only support 673 construction jobs but, importantly, they will support almost 50 ongoing jobs. That is almost 50 families who are assured of a sustainable income because our government is spending money where it makes the most difference.

Queensland local governments are the backbone of our communities. Theirs is not an easy job. Their job is to maximise service delivery whilst keeping rates at a level that is affordable. With the help of the Palaszczuk Labor government that job is made easier. The Palaszczuk government's Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning manages many grants and subsidy programs all aimed at supporting our local government partners. It does not matter to whom I speak from local government—whether it be Mayor Tate on the Gold Coast City Council last week; Lord Mayor Quirk from Brisbane City Council; or Paul Antonio, the Mayor of Toowoomba Regional Council, last Saturday night they all tell me that they are satisfied and impressed with what we are doing as a government.

In the past two financial years Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program funding has delivered more than \$55.64 million to councils for 165 vital community infrastructure projects. In Gladstone, as an example, a grant of more than \$283,000 is going towards upgrading the water main at the Clinton Reservoir and will improve the quality of Gladstone's drinking water. I know the member for Gladstone is very happy along with the council at Gladstone that they are receiving this infrastructure and this support from the Palaszczuk Labor government, which is creating and supporting 15 jobs.

If we go to Mackay, the stunning Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens is benefiting from fast-tracking a grant of almost \$750,000 to build a new nursery and operations centre. That project is supporting 13 jobs. I know the member for Mackay is very happy with the outcome from the Palaszczuk Labor government in supporting the Mackay Regional Council.

The Carpentaria Shire Council has recently started work on the expansion of the Les Wilson Barramundi Discovery Centre with the help of an almost \$2.5 million grant while the Winton Shire Council is cracking on with creating a film production studio with a grant of \$60,000. There are many more examples of these council priority projects underway right across Queensland.

The Palaszczuk government has not only eased the financial strain on councils but we are streamlining the application and evaluation process for funding. That is because this government is absolutely determined to do all it possibly can to get the money out the door, supporting our regions and supporting jobs. I am pleased to report today that the turnaround time for evaluating applications from councils has been reduced to just four weeks. The form required, which once required the filling-out of reams of paper, has now been reduced to just two pages. We have relieved the council of the difficult task of determining which funding program is most suitable for their community needs. Councils are now simply asked to list their priorities and the department does the rest.

We are delivering key community projects and creating jobs right across our wonderful state. That is what we do. That is what this Labor Palaszczuk government will continue to do.