



Speech By  
**Hon. Mark Furner**


**MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE**

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Record of Proceedings, 23 March 2017

**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Local Government**

 **Hon. M FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (2.58 pm): Since becoming Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, I have made a concerted effort to touch base with as many of Queensland's 77 mayors as possible, including the mayors of our state's Indigenous communities. Mayors are often best placed to encapsulate the successes, aspirations and challenges of local communities. They have a finger on the pulse. They are on the ground hearing the issues that affect their communities the most. The recent historical cabinet meeting in Cairns was a unique opportunity to meet with not only the representatives of Indigenous councils but also the Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils, covering a vast land area of 255,000 square kilometres. A common sentiment has emerged from those mayors.

There is a genuine appreciation of the partnerships the Palaszczuk government has established with local councils, particularly in regional areas, be it Toowoomba, the Far North or the Fraser Coast. It is a great credit to the work of the previous minister, Jackie Trad, who has engaged with councils for the benefit of local communities. Notwithstanding this, regrettably, the strong relationship local government had with the state became somewhat strained and fractured by the slash-and-burn approach of the previous Newman LNP government with Tim Nicholls, the member for Clayfield, as Treasurer. It is an all-too-familiar story.

I am committed to continuing the great partnerships—the mending of fences—instigated by the Deputy Premier and her focus on driving local economic and job opportunities. In the past two years, the Palaszczuk government has delivered more than \$55 million in direct funding to local government for community-building infrastructure projects through the Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program. The Palaszczuk government has streamlined the assessment process and we are seeing the results of that initiative. It means money in the bank sooner for council infrastructure projects to deliver certainty and jobs. Councils have reported that the program has supported up to 2,350 jobs, with the majority of them in regional areas. That is wages for local contractors and their families who reinvest in the economies of regional towns and cities.

Another initiative that has been overwhelmingly endorsed by the mayors is the \$200 million Works for Queensland program administered by the honourable Deputy Premier. One local council I spoke to recently was over the moon—not because they could now rejuvenate the main street but because it meant jobs. I was told that there were 240 jobs for contractors in an area that has been doing it tough. I am proud to be part of a Palaszczuk Labor government that is investing in the families of regional Queensland resulting in jobs and infrastructure growth for Queenslanders.