




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Waltzing Matilda Centre

 **Hon. M FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (10.07 am): I recently had the absolute privilege of being in Winton to turn the first sod with local mayor 'Butch' Lenton for the reconstruction of a Queensland icon. In 2015 the Waltzing Matilda Centre burned to the ground. The Waltzing Matilda Centre was Winton's tribute to Banjo Paterson's famous bush ballad written in 1895 at nearby Dagwood Station. *Waltzing Matilda*, with the help of a billy tea advertisement, went on to become an unofficial national anthem.

The Waltzing Matilda Centre was quintessentially outback Queensland. Winton's loss of the Waltzing Matilda Centre was a bitter blow for a community already struggling with severe drought. The Waltzing Matilda Centre, along with the spectacular outdoor Australian Age of Dinosaurs museum, was a significant contributor to the region's economy.

We know that bush communities are made from stern stuff. They are resilient. I am pleased to inform the House that work is now underway to see the Waltzing Matilda Centre mark 2 rise from the ashes. The \$22 million rebirth of the Waltzing Matilda Centre stands as a symbol of partnerships and the cooperation of all three levels of government. The Palaszczuk government's Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program has invested \$1.2 million in cutting-edge architectural design featuring over 2,250 square metres of open spaces to bring to life Winton's world-famous bush ballad. It will deliver jobs. I am informed by the construction contractor that the Waltzing Matilda Centre will support up to 200 jobs.

While in Winton I announced, on behalf of the Minister for Main Roads, Hon. Mark Bailey, \$2.25 million to pave and reseal seven kilometres of road to the Australian Age of Dinosaurs museum as part of the Transport and Tourism Connections program. It will help drive tourism to the museum, coupled with the rebirth of the Waltzing Matilda Centre.

Mayor 'Butch' Lenton is extremely positive about the prospects of Winton and Western Queensland. Construction is expected to be completed by April to encourage Commonwealth Games visitors to Winton for a truly unique Queensland outback experience. I know the Premier shares my interest in Winton after naming her dog after the town itself. I for one cannot wait to come 'a-waltzing Matilda' with Winton once again.