




Speech By
Scott Stewart

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

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MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Townsville Electorate

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (12.43 pm): I rise today to provide the House with an update of the successes made in Townsville under the initiatives of the Palaszczuk government over the last two years. The Palaszczuk government is a government committed to jobs, jobs and more jobs. This is evident through the \$100 million Back to Work program, which has been very successful for employers in Townsville. In fact, recent figures showed that North Queensland, along with Far North Queensland, is leading the charge with more than 344 employees across a range of areas including local tourism, retail, construction, and health and education service sectors.

I had the opportunity to take the Premier to a local business in Townsville called Flying Colours Aviation, which is the only aircraft painting business in the southern hemisphere. This family owned business run by Linda Armstrong currently employs 25 local people and will be taking on an additional 15 people through the Back to Work program so they can cope with the increased demand for their services.

The second aspect to the Flying Colours Aviation story is about a young worker whom we met named Harry who was employed under the Back to Work program who was a former Queensland Nickel worker. As most of us remember, Townsville was devastated by the announcement by Clive Palmer on 15 January last year that he was closing the Queensland Nickel refinery down and therefore throwing 800 employees out of the gates and onto the unemployment line. Estimates are now that around 2,500 indirect jobs were lost in the city due to the closure of that refinery.

It was the Premier who on 20 January last year in Townsville implemented an Accelerated Works Program on projects to the value of \$187 million to help stimulate 430 job opportunities in the city. Some of those jobs have been completed while others are still underway including the upgrade to the Port of Townsville's berth 4 worth \$55 million which employs over 100 local people. There is the Ergon Energy Townsville depot stage 2 worth \$42 million where long-time local construction owner Adrian Gabrielli, who won the tender and who loudly advocates for local workers, will put his money where his mouth is and employ around 60 locals to help him complete that job.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the Townsville stadium. The Palaszczuk government's commitment of \$140 million towards the project is a confidence booster that the city desperately needed. Approximately 700 jobs during the construction process and an estimate of around about 1,500 indirect jobs means there will be many businesses that will benefit across the city from this project. Minister Anthony Lynham announced on 20 December that local architects 9point9 under the direction of Cox Architecture were chosen for their design of the stadium. Just last week the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland, Minister O'Rourke, announced that three businesses with long-term offices in Townsville were short-listed for the managing contractor position. Those businesses are CPB Contractors, Lendlease and Watpac which now need to develop their detailed strategy as part of the EOI process on how they will maximise employment opportunities for local Townsville businesses.

I will continue to outline the plethora of programs the Palaszczuk government is implementing in Townsville to create jobs, build infrastructure and return Townsville's economy back to the thriving hub of North Queensland. I will briefly mention projects like the \$80 million Burdell State School, the first school to be built under the Palaszczuk government and in Townsville; the \$28 million promenade deck in the PDA; and a \$9 million airport apron upgrade. There is the Works for Queensland program and \$21.8 million worth of funding from the Deputy Premier for Townsville City Council designed to create jobs quickly and deliver vital community infrastructure. Backing the Adani Carmichael coalmine headquarters will generate 500 jobs in the city. Visitor expenditure increased by four per cent to \$90.6 million which is all supporting jobs in our local tourism industry. There is over \$30 million in infrastructure spending on Palm Island including replacement of power generators, water treatment and sewerage treatment upgrades and the commitment to build the health services building worth over \$8 million. Additional teachers, nurses and doctors have been employed under the Palaszczuk government. This is a government that understands that Townsville is the hub of north Australia and, as such, is investing to build vital infrastructure and create jobs where they are needed.