




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR MILLER

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Rail Infrastructure

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.09 am): The Palaszczuk Labor government is investing in Queensland infrastructure to create jobs and boost economic growth. Yesterday, the House heard about our record \$21.7 billion investment via QTRIP. Major roads and highways across Queensland are being upgraded, supporting thousands of jobs. It is not just our roads that benefit from this investment. Our rail lines are critical to moving freight over large distances of Queensland.

I am pleased to announce that we have recently awarded a \$1.5 million contract for the next phase of works as part of the \$100 million north coast line upgrade between Rockhampton and Townsville. The contract supports upgrades to the signalling and operational systems to accommodate a new track layout. The north coast line project is another example of the Palaszczuk Labor government's efforts to strengthen our state's rail capacity.

The north coast line is a key freight corridor, supporting industries and supply chains for Mackay, Rockhampton and Townsville and their surrounding communities. Local businesses, freight operators and industry have told us they want—

Mr Powell interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, please resume your seat. Member for Glass House, you are warned for interjections which are designed to disrupt the speaker.

Mr BAILEY: The north coast line is a key freight corridor, supporting industries and supply chains for Mackay, Rockhampton and Townsville and their surrounding communities. Local businesses, freight operators and industry have told us they want to increase the amount of goods they are able to carry on our rail lines, and we are doing that.

The line between Rockhampton and Townsville is mainly single track. The passing loops along its route are vital to supporting more efficient train movements. This project will extend the length of eight passing loops between Rockhampton and Townsville from 700 metres to more than one kilometre. These extensions will allow freight trains operating on the north coast line to increase in length by up to 45 per cent—from 650 metres to 950 metres.

Once completed, this extra rail capacity will support the viability of job-creating industries, including the meat, cement and gas industries, which call Central and North Queensland home. It will make rail freight more productive and cost effective. It will also make our rural and regional highways safer, make rail freight more competitive and take trucks off our roads. The project will also create jobs in local communities through the engagement of local suppliers.

The Palaszczuk government is continuing to invest in the Townsville to Mount Isa rail corridor as well. The Mount Isa line carries more than 70 weekly movements, split between passenger services and the transport of about 84,000 tonnes of freight. We have committed an additional \$50 million over

two years for critical track improvements on this valuable piece of infrastructure, which this government kept in public hands. This builds on our \$43 million investment in 2017-18 along the line, bringing the total investment in the Mount Isa line up to \$380 million over the next five years.

On the central west line that supports local freight and the twice-weekly tourist favourite the *Spirit of the Outback*, more than \$90 million in upgrades are underway. The works involve the replacement of 109 timber rail bridges, as well as more than 240,000 timber sleepers between Emerald and Clermont and Emerald and Winton. The Palaszczuk Labor government's investment in Queensland's historic rail lines will ensure we continue to safely and reliably connect both freight and passenger services for our growing state.