



Speech By  
**Scott Stewart**


**MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE**

---

Record of Proceedings, 13 November 2018

**MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Townsville, Water Supply**

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (2.10 pm): There is no doubt that Townsville is a growing city and widely recognised as the capital of Northern Australia given that its population hovers around 200,000 residents. With this population growth comes demand on infrastructure both now and into the future. We all know in our own communities the importance of reliability, affordability and security of water in enabling towns and cities to grow. In December 2016, Townsville had been through three failed wet seasons and the prognosis for rain in 2017 was not looking any better. The council were already pumping through the Haughton channel and barely keeping up with the demand, given that the city was already on level 3 restrictions.

I met with the Premier and Minister Bailey several times during 2016 and 2017 advocating for funding to increase the capacity of the water pipeline if the city was to grow and to encourage additional manufacturing and large industry to the region. The water task force was established to determine solutions to meet the water needs of our growing city. When the task force released their interim report, without hesitation the Premier and the minister committed \$225 million to upgrade the water pipeline. When we talk about game-changing decisions, decisions that make significant impacts, this is one of those moments in time when the decision to back the people of Townsville, with \$225 million to increase the capacity of water for the city, will remain in their memories for generations.

The Palaszczuk government's local procurement policy, allowing contract packages to be broken down into smaller components so that local contractors have the ability to bid for these contracts, has brought a huge change to our city. On Friday just last week, I met with Rick from KB Pipelines who told me that they are an Indigenous family run and operated company who has put on additional apprentices due to the increase in work from the water pipeline project. Rick also talked about the confidence they have in being able to do the work on such a large scale as this.

I then went on to Mendi Constructions. While Jeff Doyle was not at the company site, his plant equipment was not either because every possible truck, grader and dozer were being used on the various sites across Townsville. As it turns out, Mendi did the initial work on the Townsville stadium, on the Bus Hub and now on the water pipeline. For them, the investment by the Palaszczuk government in Townsville has meant that they have put on additional workers to cope with demand.

My final visit on Friday afternoon was to Scott at CivilPlus who were responsible for the \$100 million berth upgrade to the port. Scott was saying that they have had to put on an additional 52 people since the work started to flow from state government projects like the port and water pipeline. They, too, are involved in the initial works around the water pipeline.

The importance of the water pipeline cannot be understated for the people of Townsville. It is a significant piece of infrastructure that will change our city. Only two weeks ago the final task force report was released and stated that if stage 2 were to be built simultaneously with stage 1 it would save around

\$55 million. Last week the 'ScoMo Express' came to town, without the bus but with the Prime Minister saying that they would give money to the project—in forward estimates—after the business case had been done.

The federal government has to be dragged kicking and screaming to the table every single time when it comes to funding projects in North Queensland which they sign on to in the very first city deals. Why is it that the LNP federal government does not want to invest in the largest city in Northern Australia? Why is it that the federal LNP government is not following up on its Developing Northern Australia policy? It is simple. It is because the LNP does not care about North Queenslanders.

Many of us have spoken about the importance of addressing mental health issues in this parliament. On Friday night, Nikki, my electorate officer, lost her husband to the demons that have haunted him for many years. We as a collective need to do more to address this growing issue within our communities. We also need to be thankful for every day with our loved ones whom we sometimes take for granted.