




Speech By
Cynthia Lui

MEMBER FOR COOK

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MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Works for Queensland

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (2.51 pm): The Works for Queensland program delivers for the needs of the communities in my electorate. The 2019-2021 Works for Queensland program supports advancing Queensland's priorities through our future plan by creating jobs in a strong economy and being a responsive government. This program gives local government in regional and remote areas greater capacity to deliver minor infrastructure projects and create opportunities for local jobs.

Just last week Minister Bailey and I visited Lockhart River for the opening of the new Morrison Claudie Bridge, which was funded under this program. The rickety old wooden bridge was at the end of its tether and well overdue for retirement. The old bridge had weathered many severe weather conditions. Although it served its purpose, the safety risks it posed for road users were way too high. The Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council secured \$450,000 in Works for Queensland funds, which went towards the upgrade of the bridge. Work commenced on this project on 25 September 2018 and was completed on 6 December 2018. This project employed four local people.

While in Lockhart River I was able to meet and chat with some of the locals and hear their stories about being able to work and deliver something that is beneficial to the whole community. The opening of the bridge was a special occasion for the Lockhart River community. It was wonderful to see locals, young and old, come out to take part in the ceremony. To me, it signified something much greater: support for critical infrastructure that connects families and community. The opportunity created through Works for Queensland enabled this community to have full ownership, to drive their own infrastructure agenda—to not only build and upskill local people but also restore community pride and confidence in being part of this important narrative that would deliver a brand-new bridge built by local people, named after a local elder, and acknowledging the traditional owners of the area whilst serving the long-term benefits of this community.

There is no doubt that geographical isolation places a huge barrier to people living in regional and remote communities. Everywhere I travel throughout the Cook electorate people tell me that they want jobs. They want the opportunity to participate in paid work or engage in training and apprenticeships to gain skills and trade qualifications. Local businesses want certainty to lock in short-term contracts. In the three rounds of Works for Queensland, more than \$79 million has been invested in infrastructure and roads in local communities, making the Cook electorate an even better place to live. In the Cook electorate alone, under this program 1,931 jobs have been created or sustained so far, with 800 more to come with the round we announced earlier this year.

The Morrison Claudie Bridge in the Lockhart River community is one of the many projects that has been delivered to communities across the Cook electorate. There has also been the \$335,000 upgrade of the supermarket in Hope Vale, the \$1.1 million community hall in Mapoon and the \$500,000 allocated in the 2019-20 budget for the Mareeba animal shelter. Whatever the project, Works for Queensland delivers and gives local councils the independence to plan for projects well in advance.

Works for Queensland is a great initiative, attracting great reviews from local government in the Cook electorate. Mayors in my electorate tell me how valuable this program is to supporting infrastructure and social and economic growth and development. People in my communities want jobs. They want to be able to go to work every day, earn an honest pay cheque and support their families by putting food on the table, a roof over their heads and a bed to sleep in. Having a job can be transformational. For people in regional and remote areas, Works for Queensland acts as a gateway to other opportunities, thus creating financial independence. It fosters new and improved skills. Most importantly, having a job is a source of pride and confidence.

The Palaszczuk government backs growth and development for all Queenslanders no matter where they live. The Works for Queensland program is particularly important in regional and remote communities. I am proud to represent a government that is committed to not only addressing local needs and demands but also to empower, strengthen and build community capacity for a bright future.