




Speech By
Michael Healy

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

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ADJOURNMENT

Hawker Pacific

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (7.03 pm): Last year I had the great pleasure of accompanying Minister Cameron Dick to the opening of Hawker Pacific's upgraded aviation hangar at Cairns airport. Hawker Pacific, owned by Jet Aviation, a wholly owned subsidiary of General Dynamics, is a leading integrated aviation solutions provider with locations across Australia, the Asia Pacific region and the Middle East. Its facility at Cairns airport has been in operation for more than 10 years. They have actually had a presence at the Cairns airport for over 30 years. They specialise in aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul and they employ—which is very important—130 permanent staff. Their \$4.5 million expansion project, supported through the Palaszczuk government's \$150 million Jobs and Regional Growth Fund, will increase their hangar capacity at the Cairns facility by 50 per cent to 4,000 square metres. This will allow Hawker Pacific to target niche maintenance repair and overhaul work as currently there is no heavy maintenance capability within Australia for Fokker 70 or Fokker 100 aircraft fleets, necessitating at this stage work to be done offshore.

The hangar expansion project included facility construction, acquisition of special tooling equipment, mobilisation and training. The project will allow Hawker Pacific to add to its current permanent workforce with an additional 39 highly skilled jobs by September 2021. The expansion will also result in a high number of contractors being employed to cover peak periods. Many of Hawker Pacific's new staff will also be graduates of the Cairns Aviation Skill Centre which is training the region's future workforce for the thriving aviation industry. Hawker Pacific also currently employs 19 contractors on average at any given time.

The expansion will enable further opportunities for the development of avionics courses and new apprenticeships providing a valuable career path which will enable Cairns to retain young men and women with the valuable skills that we will be able to provide. The proximity of Cairns to Asia obviously is a major competitive advantage in attracting international business. The industry in Far North Queensland is expected to continue to grow over the next 10 to 20 years. The Cairns aviation sector is important to Queensland with private project funding totalling an estimated \$1.35 billion over the next five to six years.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to developing this industry, one that in 2015-16 generated approximately \$1.2 billion in revenue, contributed \$565 million to Queensland's economic growth and supported 4,200 jobs across more than 300 enterprises. The new hangar is a great example of the private sector successfully working with government to produce high skilled jobs in our region. I thank you also, Mr Speaker, for your contribution to that positive outcome.