




Speech By
Michael Healy

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

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MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Cairns Shipping Development Project

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (2.51 pm): I begin by apologising to the members of the public, as every time that parliament sits we have to listen to such diatribes.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr HEALY: Happy birthday to the member for Nanango. It is good to see that she is happy and that all is going well. That is good work.

I will begin with a couple of facts. The Palaszczuk government's \$127 million Cairns Shipping Development Project is now moving into its final phase. I want to let members now know how the government is delivering on its election promises. Some members have spoken about things relative to south of here, but, as theirs is a party that does not have a member north of Ayr, for them to give us advice is a little bit rich. We know that you judge people by their actions, not by what they say. When you were last in power—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member! Please put your comments through the chair.

Mr HEALY: Apart from the fact that today they would boo Santa Claus, when Campbell Newman and the LNP were in power, dredging the shipping channel was one of their signature promises to the people of Cairns. However, in their entire time in government absolutely nothing happened. It was impressively disappointing. It took a Labor government to deliver that much needed project to the people of Cairns. We recognise the importance of it and we recognise the importance of its economic potential, yet they delivered absolutely nothing. That was impressive.

Mr Harper interjected.

Mr HEALY: That is right. They offered 20 extra police, but that did not even get them a vote. It was disappointing.

This crucial project will ensure that the Port of Cairns will be well positioned to benefit from the cruise shipping industry and the benefits that it will provide to our region for the future, and not just for Cairns but also for North Queensland. It means more ships, more visitors, more tourism and business opportunities for the region, as well as improved access and efficiency for bulk cargo ships and, just as importantly, visiting Navy ships, even though our federal member still has not done anything about getting Navy ships into the Port of Cairns.

On 25 July dredging work began and it is expected to conclude in mid-September. The dredge *Balder R* and the backhoe *Woomera* are hard at work removing stiff clays from the inner harbour, which are being transported by barge to Ports North's Tingira Street placement site to be reused as part of building the industrial hub. There was a suggestion that we throw out that clay, but it is now being used to expand the commercial and industrial capacity of our port. That is a good reflection of the ingenuity that we have in the north. The dredging decision was made following studies on the existing

environment within Trinity Bay to maximise any potential and adverse environmental, social and economic impacts, while maximising the economic benefits. That is also good for jobs, which is something that my friends on the right might not be aware of. I also notice that the Cairns unemployment rate is the lowest in the state at 4.4 per cent—cue the crickets!

Austral Construction has been awarded the contract for the expansion of our port. Last week, Minister Bailey was in town to talk about stage 3. It is a \$30 million contract to modernise our wharves. A little like the policies of my friends on the right, those wharves are over 100 years old. A new concrete jetty will be constructed along the front of wharf 6 to replace the decayed timber wharf structure, with a portion of the old structure to be revealed and retained for heritage and interpretive purposes. Austral Construction has nominated numerous local suppliers. We insisted that any development relating to this particular job needed to use as many locals as possible. A number of local operators have been used, except where specialist items are not available. Austral Construction was previously involved in the Navy works on Sugar Wharf and was a major subcontractor on previous Ports North projects in the marina, which are absolutely essential.

I take this opportunity, on behalf of the people of Cairns, to thank the minister and, more importantly, the government for delivering on this vital project. We make promises to the people of North Queensland, we deliver those promises and that is why we hold seats in North Queensland. We do not sit around whining and carrying on, offering nothing but diatribe. We come up with genuine engagement, we acknowledge and we move forward.

I thank Russell Beer and Chris Boland, the CEO of Ports North, and all their staff who work incredibly hard. I look forward to the next commitment given by this government, which is the \$176 million Convention Centre upgrade. That is another guarantee that will be good for the city and good for jobs. However, there is not much coming from those on the other side.