



Speech By  
**Scott Stewart**


**MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE**

---

Record of Proceedings, 3 September 2019

**MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Townsville Electorate**

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (3.22 pm): I take this opportunity to welcome everyone to Townsville. I thank each and every one of you for coming up to God's country, to the capital of not only North Queensland but north Australia. This is the home of the Cowboys and the home of the mighty Townsville Fire, who have won three women's national basketball championships. How good was the welcome to country today! I have to say how proud I was to see two of my students involved in that. It was particularly special knowing that we recognise our Indigenous people and the land we meet on today and the next couple of days. We need to bear in mind that it was Captain James Cook who sailed past here around 249 years ago when he got off the coastline at Maggie Island. His compass went a little bit dodgy, so he called it Magnetical Isle and we now affectionately call it Maggie.

We have been doing it a bit tough up this way. There have been 10 years of drought. We have seen the downturn in the minerals commodity prices, which has led to several mine closures. We used to be the second largest fly-in fly-out mining centre in Australia. We also saw the LNP sack teachers, nurses and teacher aides and that certainly had an impact in our community.

In 2016 we saw the closure of Queensland Nickel, where 800 people lost their jobs in one day and 3,500 people lost their jobs because of the indirect association they had with Queensland Nickel. To this day, those people are still waiting to get paid what is owed to them from the closure of Queensland Nickel. We need to see that coming through. What did we see when Queensland Nickel closed? Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk flew to Townsville with her cabinet team and announced the Accelerated Works Program. She looked for ways to create jobs. She looked for ways to make sure people could get food on their tables and money in their pockets. She looked for ways for local people to retain their employment. We did not want to see people leave town. What happens when people leave town? What happens when families leave? School numbers go down and schools are impacted by that. That has a huge impact on our city.

It is the Palaszczuk government that continues to drive and drive and drive our jobs agenda. The North Queensland Stadium was built by North Queenslanders for North Queenslanders. If people have not seen it, they should have a look. This is going to be the home of the Cowboys and there are 25,000 people who go along to see those games. This is what we have committed: \$225 million for the water pipeline, with 600 jobs in that project; \$193 million for the port channel widening, with 120 jobs in that program; \$7 million for the Reid Park bridge, with 20 jobs in that project; and \$550 million for the Bruce Highway—we want a better Bruce—with 600 jobs in that project. We have seen the announcement today about raising the wall of the Burdekin Falls Dam. We have a hydrogen future specifically for Townsville.

Earlier this year, we saw the flooding event and a lot of people have heard me talk about this. There are still people living out of their homes. I have heard instances where families have packed up everything and moved 13 times. Imagine the impact on those kids in those schools. We are committed

to making sure that we look after those people. I know that a lot of people have had a look through Townsville, and I thank them for doing that. Every time they buy a cup of coffee or a meal at the local shop, they are helping my community.

When you travel through some of the backstreets, look for the shipping containers that are still in driveways. Those shipping containers contain the lives and livelihoods of people who are not back in their homes yet. I want to thank those in camouflage because the army turned out and they helped our community. They cleaned up our community for us. If it were not for those in camouflage, we would be in a tough place.

Let me contrast that with the LNP members who say how committed they are to Townsville. About 12 months ago, the Leader of the Opposition said that she wanted to make Townsville a livable city. What an insult. Townsville is already a livable city. The member for Currumbin said she had to be dragged to Townsville. They want to sell our port, they want to sell our rail line and they wanted to sell Ergon. They sacked teachers, they sacked nurses and they sacked doctors. We heard today how many police they were going to commit to us here in Townsville for crime. How many? None. Absolutely no police. This is how committed the LNP members are to Townsville. Their track record speaks for itself.