




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR MILLER

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Regional Queensland, Road and Transport Infrastructure

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.08 am): The Palaszczuk Labor government backs regional Queensland. Despite the global challenges of COVID-19, our strong health response means we are delivering a plan for economic recovery and jobs. In our regions that means creating more than 13½ thousand jobs with a record \$4½ billion pipeline of road and transport upgrades. It also means \$1 billion in new stimulus funding under our economic plan, locked in by this government to seal more dirt roads, build better bridges and link our paddocks and pits to the ports of the world. Better connections by road, rail and port are crucial to make sure that products get to millions of dining room tables. That is why the Palaszczuk government has kept our ports in public hands and why we are investing hundreds of millions of dollars to bolster rail freight.

I am pleased to announce today that we are bolstering that investment with three new projects approved as part of a \$50 million commitment for the Townsville to Mount Isa rail line, saved by the Palaszczuk government from privatisation by those opposite. Right now, there is more than half a billion dollars going into the crucial supply chain between North Queensland's largest port and the state's minerals province. These three new projects will build on the jobs already created and supercharge regional Queensland's economy through the COVID-19 pandemic. Queensland Rail will look at enabling double-stack trains to run from Mount Isa to Stuart and potentially to the Port of Townsville, with a business case to be finalised this year. We will also see major investment in improving flood resilience on the line and the replacement of ageing rail equipment like sleepers and ballast.

I recently met with the new Mount Isa Mayor, Danielle Slade, to see firsthand how our investment in the rail line is supporting regional Queensland jobs and economies through the COVID-19 pandemic. I also met with Cloncurry Mayor Greg Campbell to discuss how upgrades to the Butcher Creek Bridge and the Cloncurry to Dajarra Road sealing, funded by our billion dollar stimulus package, will benefit north-west families, tourism and industry. Whether it is rail, ports, new price-tracking software for regional airfares or more road projects for regional Queensland, it is the Palaszczuk government that is delivering a real, funded plan for economic recovery and jobs for Queensland.