



Speech By  
**Michael Healy**


**MEMBER FOR CAIRNS**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2020

**MOTION**

**Coronavirus, Economic Response**

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (3.34 pm): I rise to speak in support of this motion to back in the second stage of the Unite and Recover for Queensland Jobs plan. We have more people on JobKeeper in Cairns than in Brisbane. Our tourism businesses have been hit particularly hard by COVID-19 restrictions. The Prime Minister has flagged that the closure of borders to overseas visitors will continue. That means we need JobKeeper to extend beyond the end of September. It is vital for our economy. That is not just me saying it; that is what the OECD and the Reserve Bank are saying.

Today's package includes more support from the Palaszczuk government for tourism, with \$15 million to promote intrastate flights and to prepare us for interstate flights when they can resume. That package will support 4,500 jobs over the next year and is crucial to Cairns. It builds on the \$50 million committed under stage 1 of our unite and recover plan. Registrations are now open for the \$25 million Growing Tourism Infrastructure Projects fund, a fantastic and very popular investment opportunity. The tourism icons fund has provided \$4 million to support Cairns icons, including Quicksilver, Experience Co, Skyrail Rainforest Cableway, Hartley's Crocodile Adventures, Birdworld Kuranda, Kuranda Koala Gardens and other assets owned by both the Freeman and the Woodward families.

In addition, the Cairns construction industry will receive further support with a regional home building boost grant of \$5,000 for people building a new home in the region. This is in addition to extending the \$15,000 First Home Owners' Grant, meaning the Palaszczuk government will provide up to \$20,000 for a first home buyer in Cairns buying a new home. This package also includes \$12.5 million to support our agricultural sector, including support for our agribusinesses to develop integrated supply chains to improve food traceability, biosecurity and safety.

In addition, there is further investment in ecommerce and trade facilitation in key markets to assist with coordination of demand for regular airlift services. This will be important in Cairns when combined with the work on the regional trade distribution centre to which we have committed \$10 million; \$2 million to support our agricultural businesses in relation to diversification into new areas such as agritourism; \$8.9 million for national parks works; and a jobs boost will also make our tourism more competitive in the future while supporting tradies right now.

The additional \$100 million round in small business grants will also be important for Cairns with half of the grants being reserved for regional areas. Stage 2 of our Unite and Recover for Queensland Jobs plan will get up to 6,000 jobs secured. I call on members of this House to support the motion.