




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR MILLER

Record of Proceedings, 15 June 2021

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Railways

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (9.56 am): More than 150 years ago the first railway was opened in Queensland. Today Queensland's rail network is made up of more than 6,500 kilometres of track and moves more than 15 million tonnes of freight. It is a massive network. That is why the Palaszczuk Labor government has backed a \$46 million infrastructure project to upgrade 17 timber rail bridges between Townsville and Cairns. I am happy to report to the House that that infrastructure work is now complete, with the final bridge, at Meunga Creek near Cardwell, finished in the last few days. This project created more than 150 North Queensland jobs and provided a huge economic boost to communities around Townsville. It also supported North Queensland companies, which provided equipment and supplies for hire.

Upgrading 17 bridges has made the north coast line safer and more flood resilient. Stretching more than 1,400 kilometres from Brisbane to Cairns, the line is used by more than 6,600 passenger and freight trains every year. It is also home to the iconic *Spirit of Queensland* service, which supports regional tourism. There is no denying that North Queensland was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. Infrastructure projects like this create regional jobs and build capacity on our state's key rail lines.

When it comes to regional rail, jobs and tourism, our work does not stop there. The legendary *Gulflander* train, which runs on the heritage listed Normanton-Croydon line in the Gulf Country, will undergo a multimillion dollar overhaul later this year. We have also committed a million dollars for a business case for Maryborough rail workers to build new carriages for the iconic *Westlander*, *Inlander* and *Spirit of the Outback* long distance services right here in Queensland.

There is also the commitment from this Labor government to build new trains in Maryborough as part of our \$1 billion pipeline of rail manufacturing work. This pipeline complements our election commitment to buy back the Rockhampton Railyards and use the site as part of our rail manufacturing supply chain. Maryborough workers are already fixing the trains that were ordered to be built overseas by those opposite, and I am pleased to update the House on our plans to build new trains to support the awesome Cross River Rail. Train manufacturers Alstom, CAF and Downer Rail have been shortlisted to manufacture the first 20 trains in a purpose-built Maryborough manufacturing facility for Cross River Rail. Queensland trains will be built in Queensland under this government. Their selection follows an extensive expression of interest process by the Department of Transport and Main Roads over the past six months.

My department will continue to work with all parties to ensure that Queenslanders get the best possible outcome from that process and I look forward to sharing more news about the Palaszczuk Labor government's plan to create regional rail jobs into the future. The Palaszczuk Labor government's record on infrastructure investment is creating manufacturing jobs in our regions—50 per cent more than when we came to office—supporting tourism and helping to drive Queensland's economy. This government is about infrastructure, not cuts.