




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR MILLER

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Cape York and Lockhart River

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.56 am): Geographically, seven United Kingdoms could fit into our huge state of Queensland and you could nearly fit one United Kingdom between Cairns and the Torres Strait within the electorate of Cook, so well represented by our member for Cook. I am proud to be the ministerial champion for Lockhart River and Cape York and to work with the member for Cook to benefit residents of the Lockhart River community. I once again visited the cape in that role last week, touching down in Weipa before making my way across to Lockhart River along the Peninsula Developmental Road that links the two communities. It has some of the most extraordinary landscapes in the nation and it was impressive to see the results that are being delivered through the Palaszczuk Labor government's jointly funded \$276 million upgrade program.

The extensive sealing works are being done by a large First Nations workforce in a partnership, including Bama Civil, and one of the outcomes of our leadership and investment in a second five-year program in the cape is helping build capacity in these local Indigenous companies. Lockhart River Mayor Wayne Butcher is excited to see the road improvements every year to make the trip between his community and other cape towns safer and faster as well as local bridge, airport and performance space upgrades that are either complete or underway.

I also note the member for Cook wants to see tourism thrive in the region, and improving this road will help drive the region's tourism market as more visitors explore this unique part of Australia. For those unfamiliar with the cape, it is difficult to convey just how far it is between some remote communities in Cape York, the Gulf of Carpentaria and Torres Strait. It means that in many cases flying is the only practical way for residents to get to essential services. That is why the Palaszczuk Labor government is extending our Local Fare Scheme. It has already provided discounts of up to \$400 per flight on return fares for almost 100,000 trips, an investment of about \$17 million into our cape communities and far north communities.

When COVID-19 hit last year, it was a tough time for cape communities and for travel operators in our regions. Flights were cancelled, planes were grounded and bus services in regional cities across Queensland saw patronage plunge. The Palaszczuk government listened to these industry operators. We worked with them and we stepped in to help. The government delivered a \$54.5 million essential transport services package to keep these regional Queensland services going and Queenslanders in jobs.

As the recent Melbourne lockdown and positive cases in recent days in Sydney show, the pandemic is not over, and that is why we are extending our support with a further \$16.3 million to keep regional communities moving. This financial year the Palaszczuk Labor government is delivering \$2 billion for Queensland Rail services; \$658 million for bus services throughout regional Queensland; \$34 million for ferry services; \$16.6 million for air services in remote parts of the state; and \$206 million

to assist parents in meeting the costs of students to attend schools that are far away from where they live. With these commitments and a growing number of regional members of parliament in the Palaszczuk Labor government, this government is committed to supporting and developing our regions.